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# BEHIND THE STEEL WALL

ARVID FREDBORG

*Berlin Correspondent of "Svenska Dagbladet" 1941-43*

Here, from the heart of the enemy country, is the first record of the events of 1941-43, which provides the obverse of that which we heard from our own news sources.

The author, summoned with the other Foreign Press Representatives to the Wilhelmstrasse, heard Ribbentrop at 6 o'clock in the morning read out the declaration of war on Russia (Nazi troops had already been attacking for three hours). He saw the satisfaction which the early victories in Russia gave to the ordinary German no less than to the Nazi leaders. Everyone thought that, with Russia soon to be disposed of, the way would be open for all energies to be turned against the principal enemy, Britain. When the Russians resisted, indignation ran high—the Russians were not following the rules of the blitzkrieg game; they were fighting against international law; they had no chivalry—but, in fact, the Germans had now met an enemy as tough and clever as themselves. With the onset of the winter campaign, doubt and apathy grew, only to be intensified by the entry of America into the war: then the people *knew* the war would be a long one. Yet, another year was to pass before Stalingrad and El Alamein marked the turning point and the first phase of continuous Allied attack and Nazi retreat.

All this time Dr Goebbels was adjusting his home-front propaganda to suit the news from the battle fronts and the mood of the people. In the winter of 1941-42 the slogan was 'Rationalization and Concentration' in order to conscript all available man power, and Industry was subject to wider and more rigid control. There was the exhibition of the "Soviet Paradise" to show what barbarians the Bolsheviks were; there was the courtesy campaign to combat frayed nerves; the 'Fortress of Europe' idea was expounded to show the Germans that they were 'blockade-proof.' When opposition to the Nazi system appeared in the churches the Gestapo



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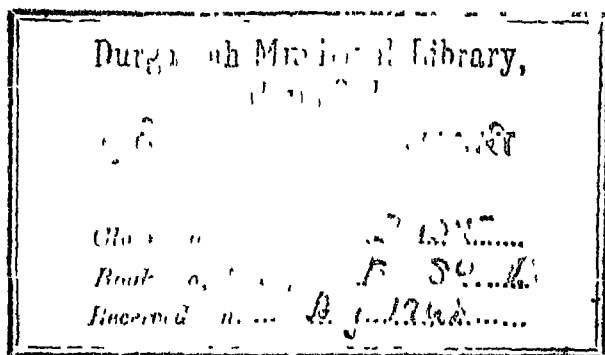
by

Arvid Fredborg



GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.  
LONDON TORONTO BOMBAY SYDNEY

*THIS IS FROM*



*First published 1944*  
 by GEORGE G. HARRAP & Co. LTD.  
 182 High Holborn, London, W.C.1

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## PREFACE

ALMOST EVERY JOURNALIST WHO LEAVES BERLIN WRITES A BOOK. This is a dangerous tendency owing to the imminent risk that he exaggerates the significance of his own experiences. Foreign correspondents certainly witness a good deal of what happens behind the scenes; but no foreign observer can claim to see more than a small portion of the great historic developments.

Should one, then, keep entirely silent? I have felt inclined to reply in the negative. Events could be properly judged only by connecting the various fragments. A testimony given while the great struggle is still in progress has, besides, the advantage of not being coloured by later events and experiences.

The Third Reich has endeavoured to maintain a smooth and impenetrable façade. Amazingly little has sifted through the joints in the steel wall round Nazi-dominated Europe. But even we who have been inside the wall know relatively little about vital events. And often when we have got hold of some important information the situation has compelled us to keep it to ourselves out of consideration for living persons. A journalist never exposes his sources. This means that nothing which is certain to be traced to individual persons must appear in print.

It has seemed natural to me to start with a chapter on the foreign journalists in Berlin. The reader will in this way obtain an idea of the angle from which events are seen. I was long in doubt about what form to choose for the continuation of the story. It is, of course, a more grateful task for the author, and makes the book more easily digestible for the reader, if specially interesting parts are singled out and lavishly coloured. But after careful consideration I have decided to try to give a comprehensive report in spite of the scanty time at my disposal. The main reason for this has been a feeling that a chronological record might fulfil a demand.

I have tried in some chapters to give a glimpse of purely political German problems. Much remains to be added about cultural questions, the financing of the war, the problem of population, and so forth. That would, however, have strained the framework of this book.

Nordic problems on which no new light could be thrown from the Berlin horizon have been touched only in passing.

It is, of course, dangerous to include a chapter about the most recent developments. Before the book has passed through the press later events might refute a good deal of its contents. But in the present situation any record is subject to that danger.

ARVID FREDBORG

STOCKHOLM

*September 12, 1943*

# I

## JOURNALIST IN THE THIRD REICH

### *The Foreign Press in Berlin*

A JOURNALIST IN BERLIN WAS NO DOUBT IN A BETTER POSITION THAN other foreigners to study war-time conditions in Germany. He had the best opportunities to sense the atmosphere and observe its daily changes, expressed more in the faces and gestures of the officials than in their utterances. But to be a journalist in Nazi Germany was to be a tight-rope walker, and making a job of it demanded power of endurance. An ill-advised word, and there might have been immediate consequences.

Most Swedish correspondents in Berlin tried to approach the situation with an unprejudiced mind. But it was this very objectivity which the German authorities did not desire; by 'objective journalism' they meant at best suppression of everything unfavourable to Germany and Nazism, at worst propaganda for Germany.

The result was a continuous fight between the Nazi authorities and the neutral journalists—the authorities trying to use the journalists as tools of Nazi interests, the journalists trying to find out the facts behind the propaganda screen. Sometimes the Nazis were the victors, at other times the journalists. Not often did Goebbels' men succeed in putting the foreign correspondents on an entirely false scent. In general, the journalists obtained a fairly good idea of events, even when they could not publish everything.

Propaganda itself would often give important indications of the very truth it wanted to conceal. After a certain amount of practice along these lines it was possible to draw conclusions which were later in one way or another confirmed as amazingly accurate.

"Wilhelmstrasse sources," "In well-informed circles in Berlin . . ."—these expressions are familiar to readers of news dispatches from Berlin. What is behind them? The working methods of the foreign correspondents in Berlin still seem to be relatively unknown to the public, in spite of several praiseworthy efforts to explain them.

All foreign journalists in Berlin were accredited to the Press



Department of the Government of the Reich (*Presseabteilung der Reichsregierung*) in the Ministry of Propaganda. The Press Department gave them a certificate which, among other things, granted the right to listen in to foreign broadcasts. About a year ago a number of journalists from occupied countries were deprived of this right. Among these were some quislings who were obviously not meant to listen in to London (which they, however, did).

In their work the foreign correspondents had mainly to deal with two State authorities, the Ministry of Propaganda and the German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*). The first looked after all practical details. Berlin journalists were given, in addition to the ordinary food ration cards, extra cards for meat, butter and bread, and special tobacco cards with the opulent allowance of twenty cigarettes a day.

Clothes and shoes were obtainable by means of special order forms. A small number of shoemakers in Berlin, working for foreigners, were supplied with better leather than the others.

The Ministry of Propaganda also provided tickets for official events, journeys, etc., and gave permission for foreign telephone calls. No foreign correspondent in Berlin could work without such a permit. Those who were allowed to run a car had a slender petrol allowance. When I left Berlin it was fifty litres a month—about eleven gallons—although certain Axis journalists received more.

### *The Press and the Ministry of Propaganda*

The Foreign Press Department in the Ministry of Propaganda had sections for different countries—each section headed by a so-called *Referent*, whose duty it was to keep an eye on one or more countries and their representatives in Berlin—*zu betreuen*, as the German phrase goes. Their task was not only to control the activities of the respective correspondents, but included also practical duties such as providing them with pictures and other material. With the assistance of *Lektoren* (readers) the *Referenten* followed the papers from the countries of their section and received from the D.N.B. (*Deutsches Nachrichten Büro*) or from the German Legations in the respective countries translations of the more important articles which the correspondents telephoned from Berlin.

The principal contact between the foreign Press and the Ministry

of Propaganda was maintained by means of two Press conferences: the first at 12.30 P.M., the second at 5.30 P.M. As a rule the arrangement between the Ministry of Propaganda and the Foreign Office was that the former dealt with all questions concerning the internal and military situation, while the Foreign Office dealt with foreign policy. But this, of course, could not be carried out rigidly. A representative of the Foreign Office was therefore always present at the 5.30 P.M. conference to reply to questions on foreign policy.

The 12.30 P.M. conference took place in the office of the Foreign Director at the Ministry of Propaganda. At 5.30 P.M. Dr Goebbels' theatre was thrown open. It was here, too, that the official news-reel was shown once a week.

Generally present at the conferences were the Director of the Foreign Press Department of the Ministry of Propaganda and one or two of his assistants, the Press officer of the German High Command, and one representative of the Party. Experts were called upon when considered necessary. From time to time there would also be a lecture. During the latter part of my stay in Berlin these were rarely of any journalistic interest.

The Foreign Press Department of the Ministry of Propaganda was originally headed by Professor Karl Bömer. This man was highly appreciated by all journalists for his sympathetic behaviour and his efforts to provide them with at least some valuable information. He also enjoyed the fullest confidence of his chief, Dr Goebbels, who rightly thought that Germany had in Bömer a person who was cut out for the task of dealing with the representatives of the foreign Press. Bömer succeeded in combining loyalty upward with fair play downward. He also intervened from time to time when he thought that the police system went too far. Some years ago there lived in Berlin a Dutch newspaperman of some repute who was generally believed to be rather anti-Nazi. His name was Max Blokzijl. Some suspicious person got the idea that something was wrong with him. But there was nothing to indicate what it was. One day Bömer met some older colleagues of mine, and in the course of conversation he told them frankly that they had a colleague with a high reputation in their circle, who was, in fact, a Gestapo agent employed in spying on them. No name was mentioned, but those present had a feeling that it could only be Blokzijl. Evidence was provided after the German attack on the Netherlands when a man

suddenly presented himself as Mussert's propaganda chief and radio announcer—and the name of this man was Dr Max Blokzijl.

Bömer had one weakness which was to prove fatal. He liked to drink and then his tongue would run away with him. His rivals in the Foreign Office took advantage of this. From time to time they organized minor plots against their colleague in the Ministry of Propaganda. They saw to it that Bömer had drunk more than was good for him, and then some junior Foreign Office official was sent along to 'tease' him. It did not take much to make Bömer speak his mind—about Ribbentrop, for instance.

Some time towards the end of the spring of 1941 this technique was skilfully employed during a reception at the Bulgarian Legation. The result was perhaps unexpectedly good—Bömer let slip that the war against Russia was scheduled to start on June 22. Fortunately for the Germans, so many dates for the outbreak of that war had already been mentioned that nobody seemed to take his prediction quite seriously. I do not know whether the Bulgarians passed Bömer's statement on to the Russians. Later developments indicate that such was not the case.

For a long time Bömer's life was in the balance. Hitler is said to have wanted to dispose of him quickly. But in this case Goebbels must be given a word of praise. He did everything to save his foremost adjutant, and after lengthy negotiations Bömer was condemned to two years' imprisonment. In 1942 he was released and given an opportunity to rehabilitate himself on the Eastern front as a private in his old regiment. (He was originally a lieutenant in the Reserve.) And this he did. Private Bömer fought with great courage. When he was wounded and had to be sent to a hospital in Cracow his return to power appeared certain. But Bömer died from his wounds.

A visible sign of his rehabilitation was given when Reich Press Chief Dr Dietrich some time later presided at a dinner at which Dr Paul Schmidt, chief of the Foreign Office Press Department, was compelled to be present. Dietrich then surprised the guests by paying tribute to Bömer's memory. Everybody rose, Schmidt last. Soon afterwards he left the table on some pretext and did not return. All eyes followed him—he was generally held to be the organizer of the plot against Bömer.

Bömer was succeeded by Dr Ernst Brauweiler as chief of the Foreign Press Department. He was an old Nazi provincial editor,

bureaucratic and unimaginative. At once the conferences of the Ministry of Propaganda became uninteresting. Brauweiler never dared take responsibility or give information. At most he promised to make inquiries about some particular matter, but by the time he replied it would be long out of date and therefore useless.

Instead of Bömer's amiable manner and ironical easy tone we got Brauweiler's stuffiness. When attacked with a question on a delicate subject he would rear like an old war-horse and give a bluntly insolent reply—completely lacking in brilliance. He himself was conscious that he did not fill the bill and tried to assert himself through harshness.

In the Foreign Office the verb *sich brauweilen* was coined for those who by virtue of office had to attend the conferences in the Ministry of Propaganda. Dr Paul Schmidt had every reason to be happy about this development, and he was.

In private talks, when Brauweiler did not have to assert his dignity, he could be both sympathetic and understanding.

The chief liaison officer for the foreign Press was Oberregierungsrat Franz Wulf. He was completely lacking in imagination and never produced a useful suggestion. From time to time he made meandering political or even military perorations, well balanced as befits a man with heavy responsibilities and many secrets weighing on his mind, and generally uninteresting.

In private Wulf might display a certain amiability. But even then there was something petty about him, which made us wonder how he could fill such a post. It is significant that Wulf, who in Bömer's time had occupied a very modest position in the department, under Brauweiler had first become *Regierungsrat* and later *Oberregierungsrat*.

There were many changes among the *Referenten* as different countries entered the war and more people were called up.

Herr Franz-Otto Wrede was the representative of the Party and as such supposed to be the right man for internal questions. He generally did not say a word. It looked as if his main task was to provide a dull news-service about the marvellous achievements of the Party in the field of social welfare. His stuff represented some of the crudest propaganda we encountered. Wrede arranged for admission to various events staged by the Party which were usually of pure propaganda character.

Herr Schwerter and Amtsrat Giese were responsible for practical

concerns, the former being in charge of ration cards, the latter dealing with passport questions and similar details. Giese was the most popular of the officials in the Ministry of Propaganda. He was like a father to his foreign correspondents, and took everything in good part, never minded being troubled, and really did his best. He was, of course, *Parteigenosse* (party member) and very anxious to display his zeal in extracting money out of us for all sorts of collections. It was difficult to refuse when Giese asked. But he never forced his opinions upon the correspondents as the others did. Giese was especially at his ease as a guide. He scorned neither schnapps nor beer and would conjure up anything for a hungry and weary party.

The spokesman of the German Foreign Office was usually Major Martin Sommerfeldt, one of the most esteemed officials of the department. His civilian occupation as publisher must have endowed him with some understanding for the journalistic point of view. Good humour and ready wit gave his manner a more personal touch than that of other officials. Sommerfeldt had for some years been Göring's Press chief in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior until some undivulged incident compelled him to retire to private life, from which he was summoned to provide the journalists with a reasoned and trustworthy interpretation of military aspects.

Major Sommerfeldt endeavoured to carry out his duties with benefit to both his employers and the foreign correspondents. But gradually his freedom of movement diminished, and at the time of my departure he could do no more than elaborate the official military text in just the same way as others did the political. Often it was obvious that he found the situation anything but pleasant. He guessed what we thought, and from those who knew him well enough he also heard it. But he had to continue as the echo of O.K.W. (Oberkommando Wehrmacht), and with every day which passed that echo resounded more and more with propaganda and less and less with facts.

### ***The Foreign Journalists and the German Foreign Office***

The Press Department of the Foreign Office was also organized in sections with *Referenten* for various countries and a special department for the foreign Press as a whole.

The chief was Gesandter Dr Paul Schmidt. His past career was in many respects remarkable. He won his spurs as a Nazi students' leader and joined in the group which gathered round the Party's rising star in foreign policy, Joachim von Ribbentrop. When the latter had reached the goal of his ambition Schmidt, then only twenty-eight years old, became chief of the Press Department. He was one of the foremost exponents of the Nazi regime and the right-hand man of his boss.

As the spokesman of the Reich Government, Schmidt appeared more than anyone else both before the Press and at all official ceremonies. He presided at the 1 P.M. Press conferences of the Foreign Office.

The esteem which Schmidt enjoyed in high places, and, it was said, in the highest place, is easy to explain. He was invaluable at his delicate post. Intelligent, alert, of ready wit and biting tongue, with no moral or other inhibitions, he was in every situation able to expound his 'gospel' as best suited Ribbentrop's intentions for the moment. The knowledge that what he said went in shorthand to his chief, and sometimes to Hitler, may have added a stimulating effect. Thus Schmidt always had one visible and one invisible audience.

One of the reasons for his success was his superb 'theatre' and finished performance. Even his most savage adversaries were forced to appreciate his elegant nonchalance in awkward moments—never losing countenance but remaining master of the situation.

His theatrical thunder and sham indignation made less impression. His repertoire contained everything—from mournful headshakings over Churchill's and Roosevelt's 'stupidity' to explosive roars over the wickedness of the enemy. To those who had heard him for some time his pathos appeared screamingly false if not ridiculous. Everybody knew his cynicism, which he demonstrated rather carelessly in private life; everybody knew that Schmidt would speak for another regime with the same fervour—provided it permitted him to keep his post.

This cynicism, however, was one of his strongest weapons. As he himself had no scruples he often got the upper hand of an opponent who hesitated to throw in everything against him.

Schmidt was overwhelmingly ambitious. His secret dream appeared to be to succeed von Ribbentrop. Well-informed people

said that he had made discreet preparations to speed up a development in that direction.

Sometimes Schmidt could be fascinating. But as a rule he was repulsive. His rudeness was perhaps the principal reason for his unpopularity. A typical upstart and completely ruthless, he treated women in particular in an incredible fashion. Introduced to two ladies of well-known aristocratic families, he said to these astonished representatives of *l'ancien régime* (which he hated), "Your time is past, ladies; mine is coming." At the Press Club, in Fasanenstrasse, Schmidt issued a decree that all women should greet him first. There was no end to his power consciousness. He displayed the same amazing lack of tact towards foreigners. His behaviour, which compared unfavourably even with the generally low Nazi standard, became notorious both inside Germany and abroad. In Slovakia he travelled as an Oriental potentate and made people pay homage to him as the Reich Government's representative while at the same time he hoarded recklessly commodities most in demand.

On a visit to Denmark he expressed a wish to be introduced to the editors-in-chief in Copenhagen, and the Danish Foreign Office arranged a dinner. The guests had hardly reached the main course before the waiters scurried round urging them to hurry—Schmidt was going to the opera. Sure enough, Schmidt got up before long, announcing that he could not stay any longer, but if any of the gentlemen wanted to see him he would be at a certain night club at eleven. And off he went, leaving behind him the editors-in-chief, some of whom had accepted the invitation only after urgent persuasion by their Foreign Office. But that is not the end of the story. At the Opera a Danish Foreign Office official was waiting to see him to his box. He waited in vain. Schmidt had gone straight away to the night club.

Schmidt's deputy was an entirely different type. Gustav Braun von Stumm was a South German aristocrat who had accepted Nazism and remained in the Foreign Office as a relic of a past era. He combined a thorough knowledge of political history with practical experience of various European countries collected on foreign service—which was more than Schmidt had. Also, in contrast to Schmidt, he knew languages well and spoke French for preference. His opinions were those of a glowing patriot, if not of a chauvinist. This attitude of "my country right or wrong" was in von Stumm's case

largely explained by a personal weakness. His education and general disposition must have made him recoil inwardly from the overbearing ways of the Nazis. But he never dared uphold an opinion of his own, and in his anxiety to appear sufficiently orthodox he was driven to strike a harsh note from time to time.

Braun von Stumm lacked the dialectic talent of his chief. His delivery was languid and uninspiring. Most people found him boring.

Apart from the various *Referenten* some outsiders had access to the Press conferences in the Foreign Office. There came, for instance, Dr Karl Megerle, who often acted as the special mouthpiece of the Ministry in the Press. In private life he was a very nice man who looked the typical scholar. His pen was considerably more aggressive than his appearance.

A distinctive type also was the editor of the *Süd-Ost-Echo*, Dr Rudolf Fischer—'Rufi'—with his hawk nose, yellow skin, and bald shining pate. At one time a leading Viennese journalist, he had now declined into one of Schmidt's hirelings. He lived in an apartment in the Press Club in Fasanenstrasse and officially edited *Süd-Ost-Echo* for a handsome salary. His own contributions to the publication represented some of the worst samples of the tediousness of Nazi propaganda. But things were not altogether easy for him. Perhaps some of the articles signed "R. F." were not even written by himself. Fischer was, in fact, a highly gifted man, known and feared for his cynicism. Frequently he was quoted for statements which would have sent others to the concentration camp. But no doubt he was useful because of his flair for committing 'indiscretions' of another kind with the foreign journalists.

Rising far above the crowd could be seen the figure of Counsellor Emil Rasche. This director of the section of the Press Department known as "Foreign Press" was a giant not only in height but in breadth. He was one of the favourites of the foreign journalists.

Some time ago, however, Rasche resigned, officially to return to his old paper in Western Germany. Rasche was a master at giving everybody he spoke to the feeling that just he was Rasche's particular friend. Many correspondents were also flattered by his readiness to take a nightcap in their homes. Nevertheless, most of them felt perhaps a little uncertain in his company. His eyes flickered hither and thither, and from time to time there was a glimpse in



them which did not go quite well with the rest of his jovial personality. Caution was advisable, for Rasche was one of the Gestapo's 'high-ups' in the Ministry and showed no mercy in the carrying out of his police duties towards his bosom friends.

The same rapid changes occurred among the *Referenten* in the Foreign Office as in the Ministry of Propaganda.

Our meetings with the Foreign Office took place in the large Bundesratssaal where Bismarck once assembled the Berlin Congress. Its interior was very much the same as then. Brown panelling covered the walls, the windows were hung with dark green curtains, and from the ceiling hung splendid crystal chandeliers. In the centre stood a wide conference table at which Schmidt and Braun von Stumm had their seats, together with a representative of the Ministry of Propaganda and the leading *Referenten*. Behind the long side of the tables where the officials sat stood German journalists, D.N.B. men, and others admitted to the meeting. The Italians would sit at the lower end of the table, while journalists from various countries occupied the other long side. When the Americans were still in Berlin their two 'aces,' Louis P. Lochner and Pierre J. Huss, sat opposite the chairman of the conference. Some of the quislings gathered behind their German masters, some at the upper end.

The conference was opened by Schmidt or Braun von Stumm.

Often—and, as time went on, regularly—a quisling produced the prearranged question of the day. This caused lengthy explanations which usually were of no interest. While the chairman of the conference delivered half an hour's abuse of Churchill, Roosevelt, or Stalin the stenographer gazed at the ceiling, tobacco laid smoke-screens all over the place, and the journalists 'doodled' on their papers. On one occasion I let my eyes travel slowly the whole length of the row to see what everybody was doing. Some drew caricatures, some made notes of their programme for the day, some did their accounts, and one wrote a letter.

Sudden interest could be aroused by a genuine question. In earlier days it was a Lithuanian colleague who did most of the questioning. But he became too inquisitive and was dismissed. During my first year in Berlin, however, the questioning was fairly general. The Japanese and Italians alone sat mute by order of their embassies.

Later we Swedes practically ceased to ask any questions. This

was noticed, and from time to time attempts were made to 'encourage' us. Several times our own country was brought up. Schmidt would say, "No more questions—not even from the Swedes?" But the silence was not broken. We had had our fingers burnt. The tone of Schmidt and Braun von Stumm had been so acid, and, indeed, insulting to those who asked something of real interest from a journalistic point of view—and therefore usually embarrassing from a German point of view—that the choice lay between hitting back (and consequently being shown the door), leaving voluntarily, or keeping silent. Perhaps our papers would not have minded if we had left Germany after a public scandal at a Press conference, but we thought we should serve our country better by staying. And so we stayed and kept quiet.

Schmidt spoke on several occasions about the low intellectual standard of the foreign Press, and hinted that he was considering stopping the conferences. This appreciation made us Swedes feel rather honoured, but we thought that the Italians and Japanese ought to have protested.

It was generally a desperate business to try to file a dispatch on the strength of the material supplied at the Press conferences. Strong pressure was exercised to make us do so, but it failed. When nothing else proved effective we resorted to a declaration that our papers would not dream of publishing this or that. We earned, of course, no popularity from this attitude. The Swedish journalists were in any case disliked because of the way they stuck together. This comradeship is one of the nicest memories of my time in Berlin. But the same was true of the other non-quisling correspondents from the Nordic countries. We were all bound together by ties of personal friendship, and we formed a firmly cemented group which met now and then in an atmosphere of unrestraint. This Nordic co-operation drew attention. The Germans were anything but pleased, especially when a Finnish group of journalists on a visit to the Third Reich were our guests for an evening without Nazi witnesses.

### *Usual Sources of the Foreign Press*

In 1941 a foreign correspondent could still present a fairly accurate picture of Germany and her policy. But in the following year when the Nazis no longer had to consider the Americans the framework

of our activities narrowed increasingly. Certain not unreasonable restrictions had always existed. Thus it had not been allowed to mention anything about the visits and journeys of foreign statesmen, the whereabouts of the German leaders, the weather, and air attacks, or the direct relations between Germany and her allies—unless an explicit permit was given. Now, however, the attitude of the authorities tightened up.

As material we used the German newspapers in the Reich and the occupied countries. Later on the latter were banned. As one source after another was curtailed the German Press became more and more important. The continuous process of diluting down all news from the German papers had, therefore, serious consequences for the foreign Press.

The German newspapers were *gleichgeschaltet*. Their political material was, in other words, uniform. The provincial Press was, moreover, especially stereotyped, owing to the so-called *Kopfblatt* system, through which a provincial paper receives all its political material from a bigger paper and prints it unaltered.

In spite of this the German Press, from the point of view of a Berlin correspondent, offered certain variations. To begin with, the papers could be divided into two groups—the Party organs and the rest.

The Party organs, directly or indirectly owned by the N.S.D.A.P., revealed in general a singularly low standard. They were, however, supported very strongly both by the Party and the State. If because of some economy campaign a paper had to be withdrawn somewhere this did not, of course, happen to the Party organ of the place. The foremost position was held by the highly official *Völkischer Beobachter*, the old principal paper of the Party, formerly directed by Alfred Rosenberg, then by Wilhelm Weiss. It was completely indigestible, with a tedious make-up, and extraordinarily poor material—it did not care to have proper foreign correspondents. Without blushing this paper served stories so old that they must have appeared old even to the German public, which had not a very big choice. It was, for example, not unusual to find in the *Völkischer Beobachter* P.K.<sup>1</sup> articles from the previous year or articles printed weeks ago in

<sup>1</sup> P.K.—Pressekorrespondenz. The Germans organized special 'correspondents' units,' the members of which took part in the fighting, reporting the battle in detail, or wrote comments.

provincial papers. The *Völkischer Beobachter* favoured certain bigger cities with local editions. One appeared in Vienna which was a little above the Berlin issue. A trifle better than the leading Party organ was *Der Angriff*, Goebbels' old paper, now connected with the Labour Front. It lived, however, largely on leaders by Dr Ley which made nobody gay, few people exactly happy.

Few of the remaining Party organs were of general interest. Among the other papers the *Frankfurter Zeitung* stood in a class of its own. Its political freedom of expression was, of course, as limited as that of the others. Nevertheless, its staff had understood in a masterly way how to maintain a standard which all other German papers had been compelled to abandon. For this reason it was strongly attacked by the Party, where the efforts of its editor-in-chief, Dr Rudolf Kircher, were considered as a masked criticism of their own mediocrity. For a long time, however, Goebbels held a protecting hand over the paper—not because he appreciated it in itself, but because he wanted one organ which could be shown off abroad. Several of the articles in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* which astonished the world with their frankness were mainly intended for foreign consumption. But in August 1943 word came from Berlin that the distinguished old *Frankfurter Zeitung* was to close down at the end of the month.

The paper's financial pages had been exemplary, and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was almost the only German paper in which something sensible might be read on cultural problems. Well-informed sources explained this as partly due to the fact that the members of the staff were too aged to be called up. If that were the case it must be stated that the old gentlemen did well.

A newspaper which also did its best to keep up the tradition was the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. This was tolerated to a certain extent. Its character was perhaps best revealed in the legal advertisements and announcements. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was the advertising organ of the German aristocracy. And it was here that the German ex-Crown Prince in the spring of 1941 announced the death of his son Wilhelm in a notice signed "Wilhelm, Crown Prince of Prussia."

The special organ of the German Foreign Office was *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, the diplomatic correspondent of which was Dr Karl Megerle. The *Börsenzeitung* retained its position as the organ

of the business people in Berlin and laid particular stress on its economic articles.

One of those papers which, though not directly connected with the Party, were yet primarily the mouthpieces of National Socialism was the *Essener Nationalzeitung*, Göring's organ, edited by Count von Schwerin. This paper had from the beginning secured an unusually homogeneous staff of young, talented enthusiasts. It could therefore preserve a fairly high standard, with notably good foreign correspondents, especially in Ankara and other places in the Near East.

In occupied countries the Germans published papers which in the beginning were fairly well run. But a few weeks after the first appearance of a new paper you could cancel your subscription without loss. Rigid instructions from the Wilhelmstrasse prevented publication of all material of possible interest to a foreign correspondent in Berlin.

During the later part of my sojourn in Berlin the main bulk of the dispatches of the Swedish correspondents was based on statements and articles in the German Press and on the official statements which in most cases emanated from the Press conferences. The latter were usually referred to as pronouncements by "the Wilhelmstrasse spokesman" or "authoritative circles" or "military quarters." Then there were non-official utterances by various persons in the Ministries which had to be used with caution but could yet be reproduced. "Well-informed circles in Berlin" was the current expression in this connexion. Finally, there was the *Dienst aus Deutschland*, a semi-official news-service where events or information were commented upon in a not directly official way but nevertheless sanctioned by the Wilhelmstrasse. In spite of all caution, the *Dienst aus Deutschland* repeatedly dropped a brick and had to make frantic efforts to stop the publication of material already issued. German propaganda used the D.a.D. frequently and not without some success for spreading rumours and statements which the Nazis did not want to sponsor officially. It was often very difficult for the individual correspondent to decide in a particular instance whether it was a case of this kind or fully legitimate information.

The work of the journalists was to a certain extent facilitated by the German institution known as *der Stammtisch*—the reserved tables in a restaurant or *Bierhalle* where a group of people met

regularly. There were two such *Stammtische* of importance to the foreign correspondents in Berlin. The older *Stammtisch* had been established by some veteran Berlin journalists, among whom was Erich Schneyder, then editor of the *Essener Nationalzeitung*. This *Stammtisch* continued to exist in spite of several attempts on it from different quarters. Every Thursday evening members and invited guests came together in the Deutscher Auslands-Klub to listen to a lecture followed by a discussion. The discussion was, of course, bound to become a tight-rope dance. But, the lecturers being members of the Government and other high personalities, the result was often interesting. The information obtained through these meetings could also be used for publication unless an explicit embargo had been imposed.

Later on Schmidt created a *Stammtisch* of his own of an entirely different character. It assembled on Tuesdays in the Press Club in Fasanenstrasse. Its task was partly to kill Schneyder's *Stammtisch*, which, in a way, represented Goebbels, while Schmidt's, of course, represented von Ribbentrop. The invitations to Schmidt's *Stammtisch* were guided by his particular personal views. He claimed that his guests were the cream of the Berlin corps of journalists. This 'cream' contained all the Rumanians, Bulgarians, Slovaks and Croats, one Hungarian—at the time of my departure no Hungarian at all—and so forth. On the Scandinavians he bestowed his favours very sparingly. A few Danes and Swedes became members. I was not among those selected.

Schmidt's *Stammtisch* also provided lectures. But sometimes there was only a discussion on a subject chosen by Schmidt himself. This subject often was Sweden, for which he cherished an unhappy love, a sort of *Hassliebe* (hate-love). The debate was even more hamstrung than at Schneyder's meetings and consisted to a large extent of lengthy orations by Schmidt himself, who, it seemed, needed to let off steam. Amazing things were sometimes said at these Tuesday conclaves in Fasanenstrasse. On many occasions pronouncements were made here with the purpose of having them forwarded to the various legations in Berlin when the Wilhelmstrasse wanted to give them a discreet warning or admonition. In other cases, no reasonable explanation of the indiscretions committed was discoverable except for the desire to have a chat with foreigners natural to a people living under the compulsion of silence.

Some general rule of discretion presumably governed the meetings at Schmidt's *Stammtisch*. Certainly most of the information given there was not suitable for publication. Nevertheless, everything that was divulged was common knowledge the following day in the big journalistic news-market. What some sixty foreign journalists had heard could obviously not be kept secret.

### *Press Association and Clubs*

The foreign correspondents had good support in their professional association, Verein der ausländischen Presse zu Berlin. It comprised most of the genuine foreign journalists in Berlin. The paid agents of the Ministry of Propaganda and the Foreign Office, equipped with Press passes, were kept away as far as possible. Unfortunately the percentage of more or less suspect individuals increased steadily in spite of that policy, and to make a distinction became more and more difficult.

The Scandinavians tried to keep their lines intact. Radio announcers were not recognized as colleagues. There were, thank God, no Nazis among the Swedes. And Norwegian and Danish quislings were kept in check. When one of the worst specimens—the Icelander Hoyer, said to represent some L.S. papers<sup>1</sup> in Denmark—applied for membership it was refused. This fellow was, incidentally, one of the very few who deliberately greeted people with "Heil Hitler."

The Foreign Press Association was perhaps the sole body in the whole of Germany which held democratic elections with secret votes. It was the only one in which an election campaign took place in public. Early in 1942 the fight was particularly violent. The Swede Bertil Svahnström who had been chairman during 1941 put up for re-election. Reich Press Chief Dietrich then issued an order to the journalists of the Axis countries to vote for an Italian. After the departure of the Americans the neutrals were in a minority. Every one of them turned up, however, and as the poll was secret Svahnström was re-elected by a great majority. Dietrich then chose another way out. He began to persecute Svahnström ostentatiously and hinted that as the association had not shown the sense to choose

<sup>1</sup> L.S. is a Danish farmers' organization with Nazi tendencies.

a chairman who enjoyed Dietrich's confidence it would feel the force of his anger as a body.

Finally Svahnström came to the conclusion that he would do best to resign. Immediately favours were again showered on the association. But it did not become *gleichgeschaltet*. There was too much feeling for the sanctity of the profession among many Axis journalists, including the new chairman himself. The strong group of Japanese could not be frightened, they had no reason to give in to Dietrich's pressure. The association could, therefore, carry on upholding its traditions, though with necessary concessions to the harsh demands of reality.

The association was of considerable material value to its members. The most appreciated privilege was perhaps the weekly half-kilogramme of Danish butter. It made you realize what the shortage of fats meant to the German people. The difference between German and Danish butter was amazing.

Another important favour was that members of the association could obtain German marks through the Deutsche Golddiskontbank at a lower rate of exchange.

Both these privileges depended, of course, on the goodwill of the German authorities. All attacks on the association were preceded by sudden trouble over the butter deliveries or by rumours that the cheap mark would be withdrawn. Usually, however, the Nazis had every reason to try to keep the foreign journalists in good humour. I have already mentioned that a great number of them were paid directly by the Ministry of Propaganda. Another device was to settle various bills for them—for instance, for the telephone. Many neutrals had to keep up a persistent fight to escape favours of this kind. Then, there was the lovely house called 11 Julienenhof outside Berlin, which had been fitted out for the journalists' recreation. From time to time correspondents from various countries were invited there. Quislings could stay for weeks.

Foreign correspondents were otherwise entertained at the two Press clubs. Only in exceptional cases did the German officials ask foreigners to their homes, although their Ministries gave them extra coupons for that purpose.

Dr Goebbels' Press club was housed in the old Bleichröder palace in Leipziger Platz. Its first floor was reserved for Germans of various categories who wanted better food than they could get in the ordinary



restaurants. The second, third, and fourth floors were put at the disposal of the foreign Press and the officials of the Ministry of Propaganda. The interior was pompous but coldly impersonal. The food was considerably better than in the restaurants in town, while the service, to put it mildly, was mediocre. Microphones were installed in all the rooms for summoning guests to the telephone upstairs in the secretariat, but the microphones could, of course, also be used for other purposes. Newspapers, telephone, and radio were available in the reading-rooms, and there was even a bar which managed to keep up good supplies for a long period.

The Auslandspresseklub in Fasanenstrasse had taken over the premises of the Anglo-German Society—the crockery still bore the crest of the society—and was comfortably and discreetly furnished. Here prevailed a much more homely atmosphere, and as the service was excellent—all the waiters were ex-butlers from German legations abroad—and the food good, this club was preferred by the Scandinavians. Those with households of their own went there at least on Saturdays, when soirées were held. But you had to be careful not to patronize it too frequently, as that would immediately be observed by 'the other side'—that is, the Ministry of Propaganda.

### ***Censorship and Control***

The competition between the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda was the salvation of the foreign correspondents. Those who were in the bad books of the one side of the Wilhelmstrasse could automatically count on the sympathies of the other. This often prevented penalties which would otherwise have been inevitable.

There was no advance censorship. The Nazis have made a first-rank propaganda feature of this. The idea was indeed extremely good. By insisting upon certain rules of conduct for the foreign correspondents, and afterwards making them responsible for the contents of their papers, they forced the journalists to adapt themselves to the German line of propaganda and even to serve up this propaganda in a digestible form. The Nazis talked with pride of this *freie Berichterstattung*—freedom of reporting.

It must be recognized that Dietrich's system *had* certain advantages for the correspondents. Above all, it saved time. But freedom of expression became extremely limited. There were so many hidden

reefs to be avoided. The correspondent had to develop an instinct for all the shifting sands of the political situation—what was permissible only yesterday might be out of the question to-morrow. As the limits were so narrow, one was, of course, always close to the danger-line. This was a nerve-racking game. Outsiders asked us if it was necessary to take the risks. It *was* necessary—partly to dispatch something of interest, partly to prevent the limit from being further narrowed. Had a great number of foreign correspondents voluntarily imposed more stringent restrictions upon themselves the Germans would certainly have taken advantage of it.

The neutral journalists refused to be used as tools. Attempts in that direction induced us to dispatch all the negative items we could find. And the Nazis had no perception of the simple truth that if they wanted a neutral correspondent to produce something in their favour they had to give him facts of interest. Ordinary dull propaganda material would go in the waste-paper basket and not a line of it into the paper. All endeavours to make the Nazis understand this were unavailing.

The day after publication every word of our articles was scrutinized by the German Legation in Stockholm and the Ministries in Berlin. Then it was a question of being on the right side of the invisible danger-line. Sometimes an incident could be cleared up by blaming the staff in Stockholm for having cut the article too much or having misheard on the telephone. (All the Swedish correspondents telephoned their dispatches.) But frequently we got into trouble.

Many articles and telegrams would have passed without remark had it not been for Allied propaganda. It was a doubtful pleasure to hear over the London or Moscow radio: "The Berlin correspondent of the *Svenska Dagbladet* writes . . ." Next day you heard from some of the *Referenten*. The quotations from your dispatches by the British, American, or Russian radio were anything but accurate.

A complete machinery was set in motion if one of us had overstepped the limit. As a rule it was the Ministry of Propaganda which inflicted the punishment. But when Schmidt requested it the Foreign Office *Referenten* could also bring you to book.

For a minor misdemeanour the castigation might be a rating over the telephone from the *Referent* of the Ministry of Propaganda. In more serious cases he would summon the correspondent and give

him a lecture—you felt, in fact, like a schoolboy. In still more serious cases you had to pay Dr Brauweiler a personal call, and he would then inform you that a more drastic punishment had been meted out. It was usually one of the following five:

- (1) written warning;
- (2) telephone banned for longer or shorter period;
- (3) recommendation to prepare to leave the country;
- (4) expulsion within 48 or 72 hours;
- (5) arrest and trial for high treason, espionage, etc.

There were certain variations in this system, as, for instance, exclusion from the Press conferences, the Press clubs, and so forth. The telephone ban applied to the correspondent personally and should not be confused with the general ban on telephonic communications with foreign countries imposed by the German authorities immediately before important events, such as meetings between Hitler and Mussolini.

The punishments were inflicted very arbitrarily. A foreign correspondent had reason to consider the tag: "Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi." The misdemeanours varied, according to the country and the paper the culprit represented, and, of course, according to the opinion held by the arbitrators of the correspondent's political attitude and to his personal standing with them.

Meticulous thoroughness was employed in supervising foreign journalists. This was in the nature of things and nothing to make a fuss about. One could not help feeling uneasy every time one of those who were officially colleagues revealed himself as a Gestapo creature. Gradually every Berlin correspondent learned to classify the 'foreign journalists' in three groups. The first contained police spies pure and simple. They generally betrayed themselves through their clumsiness. To this category belonged the unpleasant figure of Dr Max Blokzijl. But there were others—people with whom you talked cordially, and at length and with apparent frankness though at the same time conveying nothing. The next group included the great majority who were not directly employed by the Gestapo, but who, owing to personal inclination, political opinions, or special circumstances, could not be relied upon without reserve. With many of these you could talk more freely, but it was best not to go too far. The third group consisted of journalists from different countries

all over Europe. They were bound together by personal friendship or common interests, and they could trust each other.

An outsider would probably not have been aware of these conditions. Ostensibly everybody was equally friendly with everybody else—except, of course, with the quislings. A conversation between three people would continue quietly and without interruption even when a fourth person broke in. And yet, somehow, it changed character without betrayal by word or glance.

A look over one's shoulder has been called "the German glance." Foreign journalists in Berlin were well advised to practise this to a Machiavellian perfection.

Surveillance was not only exercised through 'colleagues,' but also by downright police methods. One was shadowed in the streets, homes were watched and telephones tapped. The telephone-tapping was not as a rule continuous, but was applied for a few weeks intermittently. It was relatively easy to detect. Audibility deteriorated.

Extraordinary things happened to the telephone. I once lifted the receiver and cut right into a military conversation between a general and a colonel in the High Command. On another occasion there was a discussion between two officials who were obviously directly concerned with the telephone monitoring.

The recording of private talks at home by means of the telephone could be prevented by taking off the receiver or covering the instrument tightly with some heavy material. But one could not feel safe even then as there was yet another means of eavesdropping—that is, through a special microphone. On one occasion the Ministry of Propaganda made a blunder. It allowed a specialist from Siemens to give a lecture on modern technical progress. The lecturer mentioned a certain kind of new membrane which recorded the faintest sound. Afterwards several of us considered our own situation in the light of these revelations and started a search at home. A diminutive microphone may be installed anywhere, in an open fireplace, underneath a radiator, in a ceiling-lamp, in an electrical wall-plug, and so forth. The latter is particularly dangerous. In our flat at Jerusalemstrasse—that is still the name of the street—my wife observed every day about eight o'clock in the evening a sound like the snap of a switch. A careful investigation—the owner of the flat was a French journalist, and our predecessors had been two American correspondents—showed a contact in the wall unconnected with any

ordinary electrical apparatus. Behind it we discovered a tiny mouth-piece and two black screws with a very thin disk attached to their points. We replaced everything and added a 'covering slip.'

The reader may laugh at these stories in Nick Carter vein. But there is convincing evidence of the outstanding monitoring system of the German police. Newly built foreign legations are a menace to their inhabitants, and in one or two cases experts from the respective countries have made remarkable discoveries.

Journalists also received warnings from time to time which would not have been possible had their telephone conversations not been tapped. And there were one or two obvious cases of 'bad luck.' A colleague from South-eastern Europe had, for instance, entertained himself by writing an article 'as he would like to write it.' He read it for fun to another colleague. Next day he was summoned to one of his good friends among the German officials and interrogated in a harsh tone as to what he had been doing the day before at such and such a time. He replied that he had been tight and embarked on an innocent joke. The official pressed a button, and in came a man with a gramophone who let the journalist hear his own article read by himself. That happened when they still used disks; to-day they use steel ribbons.

In spite of all supervision the foreign journalists managed to come in contact with people from every walk of life. But exceptional caution was necessary. From time to time we were sought out by people offering information of various kinds. A great many of them were *agents provocateurs*. Then we had to curb our tongues. We generally saw through them after one or two encounters.

Public feeling might be sounded by talking to the man in the street. A few cigarettes or a pat of butter would make him speak, but often no special stimulants were necessary. Average Berliners became remarkably frank during 1942 and 1943. They said amazing things to foreigners whom they barely knew. "Swedish" and "*Svenska Dagbladet*" were passwords. More than once when I had parked my car in some quarter of the town which I did not know and had to consult a map some one would whisper, "Go to So-and-so if you want information." It paid to follow such advice.

To contact the opposition demanded no special efforts. The opposition saw to that. Early in the morning or preferably in the

evening when the black-out was complete somebody would steal in just before eight o'clock when my outer door was shut. It might be eleven before he would quietly disappear.

It was also possible to make short trips to the country. Swedish journalists were given 50 per cent. reduction for one railway journey a month. We had to report to Giese, who made a note of destination, date, and so forth—a discreet and efficient method of supervision. But if we bought an ordinary ticket and went for a day's trip (if we stayed away overnight we had to report to the police) we might study opinion in the country, at least as far as Brandenburg. And there we met evacuees from Western Germany too.

Every correspondent had, of course, his private sources of information for which he paid in kind with coffee, cigarettes, etc. Few refused this payment, and their number decreased as time went on.

## II

### OUTBREAK OF THE RUSSO-GERMAN WAR: THE FIRST HALF-YEAR

#### *The Game Opens*

THE RUSSO-GERMAN PACT OF FRIENDSHIP OF 1939 WAS BASED ON untenable premisses. The aims of the two countries were completely opposed. And, although the subjects of dispute were shelved for the time being, it was obvious that an open clash was bound to come sooner or later. At the beginning of 1941 the clash was expected to occur in the course of the year. The conviction that it was impending grew among foreign observers as report followed upon report about enormous German preparations in the East, troop concentrations in Poland and East Prussia, new airfields, massing of material, and so forth.

In May strong tension prevailed in the German capital. But week after week passed and nothing happened. Rumours whirled wide, each more fantastic than the other. On Saturday, June 14, at seven o'clock in the evening telephone communications with the outside world were suddenly cut. The entire journalistic corps in Berlin stayed up through the night, expecting a telephone message that the Foreign Secretary had called a special conference for 5 A.M. But no message came. And in the following week an alternative to war appeared possible. Well-informed circles—obviously 'inspired'—intimated that Germany had presented Russia with final demands, and that Stalin had yielded, accepting German control of the Ukraine and the oil-wells. In the general agitation and under the impression that the power of the German war machine was overwhelming, more than one observer gave credit to this rumour. And had not the Soviets offered something like an apology when the official Russian news-agency, Tass, denied all reports of a Russo-German tension?

I did not know what to think. The excitement was enormous. Would the Russians make concessions? And yet there were indications that the issue would have to be solved on the battlefield. It was said that translators had for a long time been closeted in

well-known hotels working on official documents just as they had done before April 6, when Yugoslavia was attacked.

On June 18 the pact with Turkey was announced and generally interpreted as a link in the preparations for an attack on Russia.

On Saturday, June 21, 1941, nobody felt like working, since it was impossible to write a word about what was in everybody's mind. Several of us decided to close down. Russo-German relations had been taboo, and it had also been made clear to the foreign correspondents that transgression of this embargo would be followed not only by expulsion but by 'other measures.'

In the evening the corps of international journalists in Berlin assembled in the Press Club in Fasanenstrasse, where a number of high officials from the Wilhelmstrasse and some foreign Press attachés were also present. Schmidt arrived in person and went round with a smile of anticipation, which was, however, not unusual for him. To direct questions he replied as brilliantly and evasively as always.

I remember that most of those present had a feeling something was going to happen within the next forty-eight hours. The hours passed. It struck one, then two, then three. The company began to disperse. As my flat was not far from the Wilhelmstrasse I thought I could go home. I rang up one or two colleagues, but nobody had heard anything so far. I went to sleep with my head on the writing-desk and was aroused by the telephone at four o'clock. It was Dr Grosse at the Press Club in Fasanenstrasse. He said, "The Press conference is fixed for six A.M. The Bundesratssaal." That was all.

The Underground was not running at that hour, so I walked. Near the Hotel Kaiserhof a window opened. Fanfares on the radio were heard from within, and soon after Dr Goebbels' familiar voice. One or two nightbirds stopped in the street. The sun was shining brightly. A waiter at the Kaiserhof had already heard the news. "It's what we expected," he said. "Now we'll kick Stalin in the pants." In the Wilhelmsplatz my colleagues were hurrying towards the Foreign Office. There the crowd was terrific. At six o'clock sharp Ribbentrop entered in uniform at the head of his staff with a number of officials from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda. In breathless silence he announced that Germany had declared war on Soviet Russia, and that German troops and the Luftwaffe had gone to attack along the whole front at three o'clock in the morning. Applause broke out, then silence descended again



as Ribbentrop began to read out the declaration of war with its lengthy motivation.

There were certainly many who wondered what Ribbentrop was thinking at this moment when he had to proclaim the doom of his own foreign policy. It was common knowledge that Ribbentrop had been a convinced supporter of the alliance with Russia. His writing-desk in the holy of holies had for long been adorned with a huge signed portrait—of Stalin. Whatever he thought, he did not show it. But sweat made beads on his forehead.

The documents read out gave a strong impression not only of being a defence of the German move—putting all the blame on to Russia—but also of an apologia for Ribbentrop's personal policy, for the whole attempt to arrive at a *modus vivendi*—if only temporary—with the Bolsheviks.

There is no doubt that the declaration of war on Russia was received with relief by most Germans. It was not real enthusiasm, and certain quarters, at least Communists and ex-Communists, were strongly against it. But German people on the whole considered the decision inevitable.

Neither the Germans in general nor their leaders knew at this time what the attack on Russia would involve. Most people anticipated a relatively short campaign, perhaps two or three or at most six months before the Russians were out of the running. The Germans were not alone in holding that opinion. If we want to be honest it must certainly be admitted that the view held in most countries (further strengthened by the Russo-Finnish war) was that Soviet Russia would not be able to offer effective resistance for more than a short period. I confess that I was one of those who thought so—not so much because I underrated Russia, but because I overestimated Germany's resources. It was particularly difficult to envisage that the German Intelligence service should have failed so completely in Russia, for it had unlimited means at its disposal and had functioned perfectly in other countries.

To-day we see all these things in clear perspective, but at that time they were by no means clear. And the Germans were not the only ones to make mistakes. Strangely enough, the Russians allowed themselves to be taken by surprise to some extent. They should have known that an attack could be expected at practically any

moment. They had possibly even received a first-hand report from the Bulgarians after Bömer's indiscretion. German air reconnaissance at the frontier and incidents there should in any case have carried a clear message. Yet when the Germans arrived they came across sleeping aerodromes and bunker-lines only partially occupied. There were also indications that the Russian Ambassador did not anticipate what was in store for him even when he was fetched in the night for a visit to the German Foreign Secretary. It was said later that the Russians interpreted the troop concentrations as having been staged merely to add weight to the expected German demands, and that the Russian leaders did not believe in immediate war.

However that may be, in the light of what has later been revealed of the relations between Britain, Russia, and Germany before June 22, 1941, it can certainly be stated that a Russo-German conflict could hardly have been avoided. When Hitler realized this it was only natural that he, like Napoleon before the campaign of 1812, should want to fix the date himself. The German leaders obviously tried to secure their rear before the march on the East. Hess's flight to Britain should probably be considered from this angle. Hitler possibly tried to make Britain join him in a crusade against Russia, or at least to obtain an agreement with Britain before he gave the order to march. Another sign was the attempt to force Yugoslavia into the Axis alliance. A great mistake was made by the Germans when, in spite of warnings from informed observers, they pressed the Yugoslav Government too hard. But neither von Ribbentrop nor the henchman who in particular prompted the Yugoslav pact policy, namely Schmidt, gave heed to these warnings. The result was Simovich's *coup d'état*, the campaign against Yugoslavia, and a delay in the attack on the Soviet Union.

Less known is that yet another circumstance postponed the campaign. The date had originally been fixed for June 12. Hitler's strategic plan was then essentially the same as that which was brought into action ten days later, but for one exception. The original plan had calculated on the assistance of Hungary. But the Hungarian Government refused bluntly, stating that their relations with the Soviet Union had lately improved. The Hungarians stood their ground in spite of all pressure, so nothing remained but to alter the plan accordingly.

Another factor which seems to have contributed to the delay was

Matsuoka's non-aggression pact with Stalin, which for a long time puzzled the Germans. Obviously its real significance did not become clear until long after Matsuoka's return to his own country.

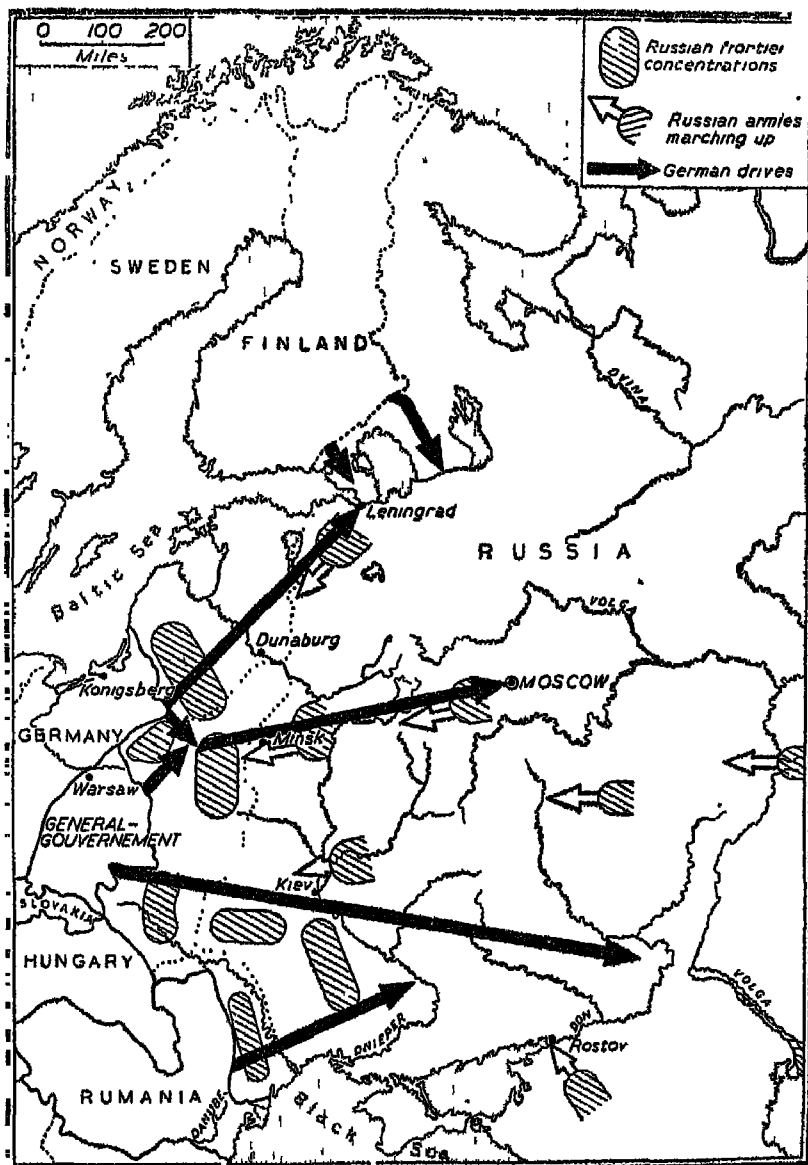
With due credit to various explanations, it should not be forgotten that the date for attack was in any case bound to be fixed relatively late for military reasons—certainly not earlier than the end of May or the beginning of June. The German High Command wanted to carry out the campaign as a blitz war over a few months. But then it was necessary to choose the season which was most favourable meteorologically for the mobile German forces.

It is always tempting to ask how things might have turned out if . . . It is not axiomatic that the German attack on Russia should of necessity have developed in such a way as it actually did. Things would perhaps have been different had the attack been launched at the beginning of June. Moreover, had Hitler not exercised the main influence on strategy and decided on the scheme of three offensive wedges, then the situation would most probably have taken another turn.

An expert has informed me that there was another plan which Hitler dismissed. Its originator was General Marcks, formerly on the staff of General Schleicher, who was assassinated on June 13, 1934. Following the example of Schlieffen, Marcks wanted to throw the main weight into the right flank with an enormous mass concentration in the South, and leave it to the Russians to take the initiative in the centre and in the North, which would have involved a substantial Russian depletion even if the German forces there were relatively restricted. All Russian attempts to break through from the north to the south would be stemmed along the Carpathians, which were to be defended at all costs from the south.

In Marcks' plan the main German forces were intended to concentrate south of the Carpathians and in the Balkans and from there to push into the Ukraine in a gigantic sweep eastward, then turn north via Moscow and thus enforce a Cannæ upon the Russian armies in the North.

It seems reasonable to assume that an operation on Marcks' lines would have involved a considerably better employment of resources than Hitler's three uniform wedges, even if it had not succeeded in encircling and exterminating the *entire* Russian Army. Marcks had also taken into account the necessity for the quickest possible results



APPROXIMATE DIRECTIONS OF GERMAN AND FINNISH DRIVES IN  
HITLER'S PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

and had intended the big operation sketched above to be followed by a drive to the Caucasus. His plan had, moreover, the advantage that the marching up of the armies need not necessarily have been interpreted as directed against *Russia*, but might have meant *Turkey*. Its obvious weakness was the difficult communications with the supply base, but the motorized forces would have had the advantage of the proximity of the Rumanian oil-wells and the favourable Ukrainian terrain.

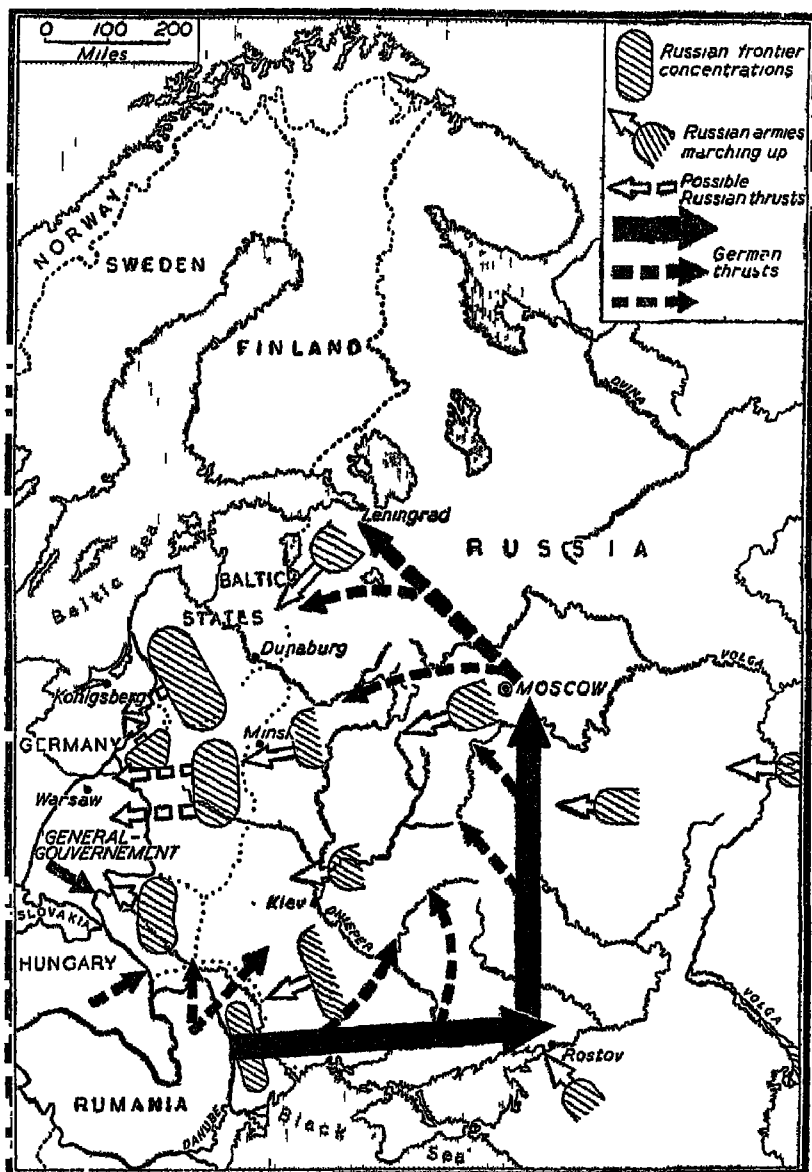
Hitler's plan probably also aimed at a Cannæ. But its uncertain prerequisite was a concentration of the largest part of the Russian Army close to the frontier within reach of German thrusts, while Marcks, with his swing to the north—which would come as an explosive surprise blow—was much more justified in expecting to strike at the Russian main forces *to the west* of his northward wedge.

### *Victories but not Victory*

The Germans went into battle in the cast-iron conviction that their strategy was superior, their weapons better and more modern, and their soldiers better trained. Further, they had a strong feeling of moral superiority. They felt undoubtedly like occidental crusaders eastward bound. It matters little in this connexion to what extent this German attitude was justified.

At the first encounter with the new enemy there was nothing to challenge the theory of the superiority of German strategy—only by degrees was it to become evident that the Russians were their equals in this field. The Russian material, however, proved both in quantity and quality how extremely well the Soviets had learnt to exploit the experiences of the campaigns in Poland and France. An important exception was the Russian Air Force, which had not been able to keep up with modern developments. This was the only substantial factor the Germans could enter on their credit side in their military account with Russia.

There are, of course, good reasons to disbelieve the accuracy of the figures of destroyed Russian aircraft which were issued by the German High Command. These figures were questioned by the neutral journalists at an early stage, in spite of the general impression which prevailed in Berlin in those days of enormous German victories at the frontier. One theory was that the Russians were using dummy



**GENERAL MARCKS' PLAN**  
This plan was rejected by Hitler.

planes. The Germans described how the Russian planes had been arranged in perpendicular lines on the airfields and how the entire fields had been turned into a sea of flames by the first bomb dropped. It was difficult to believe that Russia could make such blunders in 1941.

The German High Command kept silence during the first week, and the first communiqués arrived only on June 29. Meanwhile the most absurd rumours were circulating in Berlin—that German paratroops had taken Kiev, that the German armies were standing at the gates of Moscow, and so forth. This kind of news was often spread by the special sources in the German capital which were entrusted with the task of ‘informing’ the foreign Press without making the authorities responsible for what was put out.

In spite of the lack of real information, nobody doubted that the Germans had won a great victory at the frontier. The Berliners were living in a world of rosy expectations and assumed that the battle was already won. Asked when ‘the big journalistic trip’ to Moscow would take place, an outstanding German editor with reputable connexions declared that we should know by the middle or end of July. The authorities and the people were carried away with joy, and in Party quarters the Russian bear was already being carved up. The many peoples of Russia became a favourite subject of study. Colourful ethnographical maps of the Soviet Union were issued, and everybody discovered that there were big ‘New Order’ possibilities and even conditions for the creation of a little German State in the heart of Russia in the territory of the Volga Germans. Even late in the autumn many Germans believed that Russia was practically smashed. News certainly came from time to time which challenged the bright picture. But it was waved away with a reference to the German superiority.

Although none of the neutral journalists questioned the German successes, there were nevertheless a series of circumstances which seemed difficult to explain. There were the high figures of prisoners. They had to be compared with the steadily recurrent report that the Russians did not give in but resisted even when the situation was hopeless.

In the light of later events there is reason now to reduce substantially the importance of the initial battles. No doubt the Germans were victorious, and the Russians suffered relatively heavy losses.

But what journalistic circles in Berlin could not decide was whether the main Russian forces had really been standing close to the frontier and had been beaten by the Germans.

The Germans said that they had forestalled the Russians, who had been on the point of launching a general attack on Europe. It was then logical to assume that the main Russian forces had deployed near the frontier, ready to be flung in. Many indications supported this impression—such as concurrent reports from all who had been in the battle zone that large quantities of the most modern Russian material had been found there. The Germans themselves believed—at any rate in the beginning—that the main Soviet forces had been defeated. On June 29 a well-informed German journalist, Otto Kriegk, wrote in *Der Montag* that the Wehrmacht had engaged “the biggest and strongest formations of the Soviet Army and Air Force” and had proved superior in every respect.

But it was soon to become clear that the Germans had made a capital mistake when they reckoned on having struck at a major part of the Soviet Army at the frontier. This was only part of the general under-estimation of Russia's fighting forces and strategy. It does not prove that the Russians had *not* intended to attack Germany. There are several indications that the Russians may have had such schemes, although they were not designed to be carried out in June 1941.

One thing was obvious from the beginning. The Germans had met soldiers of an entirely changed mentality. “The Russian soldier surpasses our adversary in the West in his contempt for death. Endurance and fatalism make him hold out until he is blown up with his trench or falls in hand-to-hand fighting,” read an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of June 29. “Our enemy in the East reacts in a completely different way from the French to the German tactics of wedges and pincer movements,” said the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of July 6. “The mental paralysis which usually followed after the lightning German break-throughs in the West did not occur to the same extent in the East. In most cases the enemy did not lose his capacity for action but tried in his turn to envelop the arms of the German pincers.” The paper finally pointed out that the Soviet leaders had cherished an ambition to create the most mechanized army in the world, and that the German soldier had for the first time met an opponent who fought back with the same



weapons. This should not have been a surprise for the Germans. But it *was* a surprise; they had in fact based their campaign in the East on their experience of resistance in France.

In private, political circles (the officials in the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda) did not conceal their indignation that the Russians did not follow the rules of the game. Instead of giving in when encircled, they forced the Germans to continue the fight indefinitely. The Russians were fighting cunningly and against all international law, it was said. They were lacking chivalry and considered it their duty to kill the enemy regardless of when, where, and how. In addition to this they wilfully scorched their own country. What this Russian mentality really signified would soon dawn on different quarters in Germany.

The German soldier had met an enemy who with fanatical toughness stuck to *his* political creed and who, against the German blitz attack, put up *total resistance*.

The three wedges of attack netted large territorial gains during the first week. The fastest advance was made by those German armies which pushed their way towards the Baltic States. In a few days they had passed through Lithuania.

One of the reasons for this swift progress was the activities of the Lithuanian patriots. On the very night of June 22 to 23 they took up arms and carried out attacks on Russian war supplies. On the following day regular street-fighting occurred both in Vilna and Kaunas. The main Russian forces evacuated these towns between the 23rd and 24th. In the morning of the 24th the Lithuanians, after violent fighting with Russian rearguards and bands mostly composed of Jews, got the upper hand and succeeded in occupying buildings of strategic importance, such as railway stations, telegraph, telephone, and post offices, radio and police stations, etc.

Lithuania had barely been pacified when I went there on a tour arranged for a party of journalists. Dispersed Russian units were still about in the big forests, from time to time attacking the villages for food. It was difficult to get at them; too many other things remained to be cleared up before a systematic combing of the woods could be organized. The Russians were, moreover, well trained in this kind of warfare.

Russians were also in the cities. In Vilna, for example, scores of

them were said to have withdrawn into underground passages and the Jewish quarters, where they were sheltered by the population. During my stay shooting occurred from time to time after darkness, and the Germans executed people in large numbers, among them sixty Jews who had been fighting as partisans. Lithuania and the Vilna district were one of the Eastern Jewish centres. Jews had represented more than 50 per cent. of the urban population. A considerable portion of the people in Vilna, Kaunas, and many other towns was still Jewish even though thousands had fled with the Russians.

The advance northward continued at break-neck speed. On June 30 the first German troops entered Riga. Military developments in Latvia differed from those in Lithuania in that no large national organization could be set up. Small groups assembled at scattered points and succeeded in rendering the defence more difficult for the Russians. But the volunteers in Latvia never attained the same importance as in Lithuania. Their efforts were, however, given their full due by German military quarters.

During July the main interest in Berlin was focused on the central front. All pronouncements indicated that the Germans had trained their guns on Moscow. On July 12 the Stalin line was reported pierced at all vital points. On the 14th even the German High Command stated that the roads to Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev lay practically open.

But it was not quite so easy to pave a way to the heart of Russia. Round Smolensk the Russian Army regrouped for battle, and for several weeks a giant tank encounter raged there with varying success.

On July 19 German Headquarters announced that the town had been conquered but that the battle was still going on. On the 25th it was explained in Berlin that the fight had reached its decisive stage. A few days later the talk was again about Moscow. "In the immediate future" the road to the capital would lie open. Not before August 7, however, did the Germans produce a definite report and new fantastic figures of prisoners.

It has been said that the battle of Smolensk upset Hitler's timetable. The blitz war began to go slowly. In any case this battle proved definitely that the Russian Army was a match for the Germans

quite different from what anyone would have expected. Winter war, so far never talked of, became an ominous spectre. Hitler certainly tried, in a race with the Russian winter, to reach a decision in the East during the year. But on August 21 a high representative of the Ministry of Propaganda explained to me that a winter campaign must undoubtedly be reckoned with. The Russians had, he declared, prepared for that and therefore spared their numerous cavalry. It had further to be admitted that they "to a certain extent had Nature on their side."

Meanwhile, the German offensive rolled on in the South and, after a lull had set in in the centre, a number of crack troops were transferred to the Ukraine. One of the mightiest operations of the whole campaign began to take shape. At the same time as an army group thrust deep into the Ukraine and, at the beginning of September, crossed the Dnieper, a tremendous encircling operation was developed round Kiev and completed on September 19 when Kiev and Poltava were reported taken. On the 27th the German High Command issued a victory communiqué with the fantastic figure of 665,000 prisoners. I remember that people who so far had not doubted the official German statistics told themselves that these figures could not possibly be correct, and that it was unreasonable to assume that Budjenny—even if the cavalry general with the big whiskers had been a complete failure—would have allowed five armies to be shut up in Kiev. The German High Command had, it was said, counted all the male inhabitants of the conquered area in order to present an impressive total of prisoners.

All the same, the Ukrainian campaign was one of the biggest triumphs of the German Army. Its ultimate result was the conquest of the Crimea with the exception of Sevastopol. It was mainly due to the achievements of the Russian Black Sea fleet that Sevastopol, in spite of all efforts, could not be taken. The Russian Navy in the Black Sea could not compare in technical development with the Russian Army and was opposed by an overwhelming German Air Force. Nevertheless, these naval forces rendered extremely important service. The evacuation of Odessa was, for example, carried out with their assistance. German experts spoke of them with every respect and nursed at the same time a hope that the Russian men-of-war would in due course be compelled to seek refuge in Turkey.

While the Ukrainian campaign was going on the Germans made a large-scale attempt to take Leningrad. On September 14 all the fortification lines were reported pierced. But at the same time it was admitted that the defence was amazingly strong and that progress was slow. A few days later nothing more was said about Leningrad. The attack had failed.

The Eastern problems became increasingly troublesome as operations developed from a blitz war in areas with relatively good communications into a more 'normal' warfare over the vast Russian lands. It cost an incredible amount of labour to put the railways in order and to change them to normal European gauge; and the difficulties in bringing up supplies, food, and ammunition mounted up.

To this were added the special Russian tactics and not least the activities of the partisans, who also worked in depth. Apart from experience in Yugoslavia, the German forces had, until then not come up against this kind of warfare. The Russians, on the other hand, had prepared it for years, had accumulated supplies of ammunition, arms, and food, installed radio stations, and trained their soldiers systematically in partisan tactics. When the regular army retreated the partisans immediately went to work. They laid mines and carried on espionage. They blew up bridges and seized transports. But they did not only wage 'the little war' with every modern expedient—the partisans were obviously operating on lines of high strategy. They concentrated on important centres and had their own bases in areas which they left in peace. They would let through quantities of ordinary trucks, but would suddenly strike when a car with high officers passed. And they shifted their activities from one district to another, according to the general strategic situation. They might keep quiet for weeks and then appear just before a German offensive or a Russian attack and try to inflict the greatest possible indirect damage on the German operations.

The Germans hardly knew how to deal with the partisans. The local German military commands realized that in order to do this with any hope of success it would be necessary to be on good terms with the population. But that was easier said than done as the invaders at the same time wanted to exploit the people to the utmost.

One would have thought that the Germans, who for so long had been contemplating expansion in the East, would have studied the psychological aspects of the question thoroughly. Certainly the pact of friendship with Russia had, in its time, involved a series of changes in Berlin's Eastern policy. The Russian and Ukrainian émigrés had at once to withdraw from the limelight, the Balts had been warned to observe greater caution, and any suggestion of German expansionist schemes at the expense of the Soviet Union was avoided. But this was only a superficial change. The Eastern problems were studied conscientiously even during the years of silence. Good relations were maintained with the Baltic States, and Berlin had intimate knowledge of the situation there. The same was true to some degree of the erstwhile Polish districts to the east of the Russo-German demarcation line. But little was known about what lay behind.

That Berlin had any information at all about the Ukraine was entirely due to the Ukrainian émigrés. They even succeeded in maintaining sporadic contacts with their homelands. The facts reported in this way were worked on by highly distinguished scholars from Lemberg University. In addition, the Ukrainian colony of émigrés had received throughout the years since 1918 fresh blood from Poland.

The Ukrainian Nationalists expected much from Germany, in the beginning apparently not without justification. But after the larger part of their country had been conquered the Nazi Party took over from the Wehrmacht, and Nazi bureaucrats were allowed to flood the country like locusts. Before long they had managed to achieve the same result as elsewhere—a determined anti-German feeling. The Third Reich's Eastern policy had right from the start turned out a failure.

The fumbling methods applied in the Ukraine were in themselves amazing. The Germans counted to the highest degree on the contributions in food and raw material which they would derive from the country. That should have been all the more reason to come to an understanding with the population.

The same failure occurred in the Baltic States, where the Party quickly destroyed the sympathies which the German forces had won. A population which did not ask for anything better than to fight and work against Bolshevism was turned into an enemy of Germany—

as there seemed to be no difference between one oppressor and another.

The Lithuanian provisional Government was dissolved, and the Lithuanians were deprived of the control of their internal administration. In Latvia the creation of a responsible Government was prevented. In both countries, as also in Estonia, the Germans prohibited the hoisting of national flags and the playing of the national anthems. A compulsory exchange was imposed for the rouble at the rate of one mark for ten roubles. This enabled the German soldiers to buy everything for a song, and the three countries were quickly looted of desirable commodities left behind by the Russians. The Germans behaved as the "Herrenvolk" and made Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians feel their inferiority. No wonder that bad feelings arose.

The German Intelligence service completely failed in Russia. In spite of their resources, it had proved impossible to build up either a spy organization or a fifth column. Neither is easy when dealing with a totalitarian state. The Russians probably succeeded no better in Germany than the Germans in the Soviet Union. The Germans, however, suffered from the greater disadvantage as they were the attackers. During the military campaign little progress was made in this respect, and the only attempt to organize a revolutionary plot—in Leningrad, during the autumn—failed. Again the Russians were, through their partisans, well in touch with what happened behind the German lines. It was a ludicrous mistake when at the beginning of operations the Germans claimed that the only information Moscow had of the situation in the war zone was that obtained through the German communiqués—which for this very reason were so briefly worded.

It soon became evident that the Russians had organized their own Intelligence well. Simultaneously they did everything to hamper German espionage and reconnaissance. Weather reports had not even been issued before the clash, and two Russian professors who were attending a meteorological congress in Geneva were summoned home by Moscow lest they would reveal secrets. The Germans found maps drawn in much detail, but at the same time carefully retouched. And on fallen Russians the German soldiers came upon documents which, as it turned out later, had been 'planted' there to mislead them.

*Dr Dietrich and the Race to Moscow*

At the end of September the German High Command again concentrated all available forces in the centre to strike the decisive blow at Moscow and crack the kernel of the Russian Army, which was commanded by Marshal Timoshenko in person. The operation developed as an enormous encirclement of the Russian forces, carried out in feverish haste with the utmost strain on men and material. It was a race with winter.

The Berlin world of officials was convinced of its success. On October 2 Hitler issued an order of the day to the armed forces which made everybody prick up their ears. "To-day starts the great decisive battle of this year. It will be devastating to the enemy." The same announcement was made dramatically in the Berlin Sport Palast, where Hitler had chosen the traditional opening of the "Winterhilfe" campaign to interrupt the silence he had observed since the outbreak of the Russian war.

The performance was a display of Nazi stage-management. But in spite of the thunders of applause, the impression that a fundamental change had occurred since the last official meeting could not be avoided. Hitler appeared forced, like a man playing his most important card and trying to persuade himself and others that all *must* go well. The public was also more serious than on previous occasions. A tense atmosphere seemed to surround the leaders. Hitler expressed with deep emotion an unshakable will for victory. For forty-eight hours, he said, an operation of tremendous proportions had been going on. It would contribute to the extermination of the enemy in the East who had already been beaten down and would never rise again.

Some days passed without any news whatsoever about the progress of the battle. But on the morning of October 9 the Ministry of Propaganda telephoned round calling a special Press conference for twelve o'clock when the Reich Press Chief Dr Dietrich was to make an announcement. What he had to say was simply that the war in the East was practically finished and that only police operations remained.

Everybody asked, could it be true? But immediately the next question presented itself, how could it be a bluff? Facts would then obviously refute instantly not only Dr Dietrich but also Hitler, on

behalf of whom he had spoken. Would Hitler risk such a manifest loss of face?

The feeling among the Scandinavians grew decidedly sceptical after a conference over the maps. There were so many circumstances that could not be explained. Once the opinion that the whole thing must be a fantastic falsification had become established, the question arose, Why? It has never been possible to find a satisfactory reply to this question. Possibly Hitler *believed* that he had Timoshenko 'in the bag.' But is this explanation enough?

Later, when it became obvious that the Dietrich incident was a gross blunder by Hitler, it was said to have had a dual purpose, partly to bluff Japan into active intervention by representing Russia as eliminated, partly to bluff Russia. If the Russians were in serious plight in the centre—which certainly was the case—and the Germans made it clear that they were throwing in their whole power to force a decision, then the Russians might perhaps be scared into a separate peace. The scheme may now seem naïve, but it cannot be entirely discounted. One thing which was said in this connexion, but which it has never been possible to check, was that simultaneously with the Dietrich incident a high Bulgarian emissary was staying in Moscow to offer his services as mediator.

That Dietrich in announcing the war in Russia as practically finished had been far from the truth very soon became clear. The phrasing of the German High Command communiqué of the 9th was considerably more cautious. And as my American colleague Howard Smith has pointed out, the headlines in the *Völkischer Beobachter* and the other newspapers were eloquent enough for those who wished to understand. But it was interesting for a neutral observer to witness how this victory message, the contents of which were soon known by all Berlin, left the population entirely unmoved. No crowds, no jubilation; and in the Berlin Metropolitan and Underground the conversation seemed to be about the usual everyday troubles. I travelled from north to south and from east to west—it was the same everywhere. The German people were obviously getting fed up with the whole war. In their hearts they no longer believed in the victory proclamations.

On the 13th operations were reported as proceeding according to plan, and on the 16th the German communiqué announced a figure for prisoners only a trifle below those reported from Kiev—648,000.



The whole of Timoshenko's group of eight armies was claimed to have been smashed and the better part of them taken prisoner.

It was—and remains—beyond doubt that even if this was a gross exaggeration the Germans had had considerable successes and that the march on Moscow had proceeded at good speed in its initial stages. The Russians judged the situation of the city as critical, and on October 21 the Government was reported to have moved to Kuibyshev. At that point, however, a lull set in. Military quarters in Berlin claimed that this was the pause before the last act. Captain Sommerfeldt—he was not promoted major yet—explained that the Russians had only forty divisions left out of three hundred, but even if there were a hundred the issue was decided. Later it was to become clear that the German leaders had profoundly misjudged the size of the Russian reserves.

They also continued to misjudge the weather. Earlier it had been said that the weather would not seriously affect operations before about November 10. On November 8 it was pointed out in the Ministry of Propaganda that the weather during the last few days had certainly been bad in the centre but that the Russian climate had for three years shown a tendency to approach that of Central Europe, that the temperature in Moscow was therefore about the same as in Berlin, and, finally, that the "Russian winter" was not to be expected before January. On the 12th some statements were made on winter operations which we seized on eagerly. The keynote of these was that it was far from certain that winter would be an ally of the Russians. To this were added details on German preparations for a winter war, designed to prove how well Germany was, in fact, equipped for possible developments. Some days before, it had been stated that almost the entire German textile industry had been working for the armed forces since October 1940.

On November 22 Sommerfeldt declared that a definitely optimistic view was taken of the outcome of the Moscow operations. A few days later he questioned how long the Russians would delay their admission of the loss of Rostov, which had been taken by S.S. troops. On the 28th he went so far as to state that the German troops had now reached the Greater Moscow area, twenty-five to thirty-five miles from the city.

Then came the first unmistakable setback. In the evening of the 30th the Russians announced that Marshal Timoshenko had retaken

Rostov, and on the next day the Germans admitted its loss. Long explanations were given which certainly contained at least part of the truth. Thus the military spokesman said that the Soviet Command, in a major effort, had succeeded in obtaining an overwhelming superiority at one point, that the population had joined in the battle as *franc-tireurs*, that the German troops in the town had had a great deal of trouble with mines, and that the Russians had attacked regardless of loss.

These words of consolation and the fact that political circles in Berlin realized that the military importance of Rostov was strictly limited could not prevent a great depression from settling on both the Ministry of Propaganda and the Foreign Office on December 1. The Russians had succeeded for the first time in regaining a large city. Moreover, it soon became evident that the German troops had suffered extremely high losses. The Army officers were able to record with some satisfaction that what had happened was a complete failure for the S.S., but that was all. It may be mentioned in parenthesis that the S.S. Division "Viking" composed of volunteers from various Germanic countries sustained particularly heavy losses.

The fall of Rostov soon faded into the background of events on the Central front. As late as November 3 it was reported in Berlin that the semicircle round Moscow continued to contract. But on the 6th a sudden spell of cold of Siberian proportions set in. In a single night the temperature dropped to 40 degrees centigrade below zero, and more. The offensive against Moscow had to be cancelled in great haste. The German war machine was paralysed by a climate which had previously been so optimistically counted on as an ally. The reverse, however, which the Russians exploited to launch their counter-offensive was, at first, dimmed by the developments in the Far East.

### *Effect of the Russian War in and outside Europe*

The outbreak of the war with Russia had, from a German point of view, both favourable and unfavourable repercussions among Hitler's allies, but mainly unfavourable consequences in occupied countries.

One of the entries on the credit side was that Germany obtained Finland as an ally. Their happiness over this was somewhat damped

by the fact that Finland from the very beginning took up an independent attitude.

Another advantage for Germany was the state of public feeling in the Baltic States. An overwhelming majority of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians—perhaps more than 95 per cent.—looked upon the Germans as liberators. Such real sympathies as the Germans met in the Baltic countries immediately after their conquest had certainly not come their way since Hitler's assumption of power. No one could mistake the spontaneity of these heartfelt feelings.

The Germany which these Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians saw was the German armed forces, who behaved with habitual discipline and with an obvious endeavour to play fair with the population.

The Baltic patriots were hoping, of course, that the independence of their countries would be restored. The Lithuanians considered that they had good reason to expect the formation of a Lithuanian army from the units of volunteers who had fought with such bravado and thus helped the Germans considerably in their campaign. "We shall then go all out and mobilize at least 200,000 men," was the general comment.

We, who had some experience of Nazism in Germany, felt that these activist Lithuanian circles proved rather naïve politically. So far the Wehrmacht ruled in their country. But what would happen when Party administration and the Gestapo arrived? Once, during my trip to the front in July 1941, I was given the honour of being admitted to a select circle of Lithuanian activists. After much hesitation I decided to give them a warning. If any of them are still alive he or she will certainly recall the amazement and indignation which was aroused when I expressed my fears that they were counting on a Germany which did not exist, and when I advised them to prepare for another battle of liberation—although perhaps of a different kind from that against Bolshevism.

Another credit entry in the German balance sheet was, of course, the latent or rather instinctive anti-Bolshevism which existed among most peoples. This feeling could have been exploited in Germany's favour had the Nazi regime not contracted an irredeemable debt towards the peoples of Europe. Goebbels did his best, but the result was no more than a slight improvement in the attitude of

certain countries towards Germany. Everything that could be interpreted in this way was carefully noted down. The smallest indication was described as a "contribution to Europe's fight for liberation."

The general situation might certainly have developed into a European campaign against the danger from the East. Yet it was completely clear that the iniquities of Nazism were bound to deprive Germany of all assistance in this fight, which she had started on her own, which she carried on for her own sake, but which her leaders tried to represent as a fight for the sake of Europe.

After the outbreak of the war with Russia the German leaders certainly thought it advisable to tone down the discussion on the 'New Order.' They felt that enthusiasm for the 'New Europe' was low everywhere. But from time to time they made a blunder which showed the small peoples only too clearly what Nazi Germany was up to. The most flagrant case was perhaps Seyss-Inquart's speech in Cologne in November 1941. This man was renowned for his fatal gift for getting himself into trouble, and he now added to his notoriety.

"No state in Europe, mark you, in the *New Europe*, will," he said, "have full independence, since a Germanic *Lebensraum* involves a common policy, including a common defence and a common economic system. It is the will of the Führer that the Dutch people be linked into the Germanic *Grossraum* and be made equal partners and comrades within its framework." A short Wilhelmstrasse commentary on this speech intimated that Germany would never withdraw from the North Sea coast. This apparently implied that the Nazis contemplated a direct incorporation of Holland into Germany.

Seyss-Inquart's speech penetrated into all the small countries of Europe and provoked even Italian interpellations in Berlin on the significance of the word 'Germanic.' It helped to reduce the little enthusiasm which might have remained for a fight against Communism under Germany's leadership. This effect was not surprising as the peoples of Europe never regarded, nor will regard, incorporation into Germany as a favour.

The German public—from the Press extracts which their papers published from all the European countries—must have got the impression that the whole of Europe was behind them. On one occasion Schmidt even made the observation that Germany had won

"The Battle of Europe's Sympathies." Only slowly did it dawn on the German public that 'the big dailies' in neutral countries referred to were insignificant organs directly or indirectly financed by Germany.

The enthusiasm of the Axis brothers-in-arms for the Eastern campaign was lukewarm. Tokyo was wrapped in silence and showed no intention of intervening. Nor was an attack on Russia what Italy had bargained for when she entered the war on June 10, 1940. Now compelled to join in willy-nilly, Italy did not, of course, omit to exploit the situation by presenting Berlin with preliminary claims to certain districts in the Caucasus and a decisive voice farther east, as far as Turkestan—perhaps the spirit of Marco Polo had revealed itself to Mussolini. Hungary joined the fight only after the Russians had bombarded Budapest, and the Hungarian declaration of war on Russia was accompanied by a statement that Hungary had no territorial claims on the other side of the Carpathians. Greater enthusiasm was encountered in Rumania. Through a Russian campaign the dishonour inflicted on the Rumanian Army, when it had been forced to abandon Bessarabia and half Bukovina without firing a shot, would be wiped out. The possibility of obtaining new areas in the East and of getting the upper hand over Hungary also beckoned. Hungary would perhaps be pressed by Germany into giving up her recently acquired portion of Transylvania.

At the beginning of November tension between Hungary and Rumania increased. A picture of Admiral Horthy was solemnly burnt in Arad, a ceremony all the more provocative as this town—even according to Rumanian statistics—was populated by a majority of Hungarians. The Rumanian Press used violent language, and Budapest rumbled menacingly in reply. This time, however, Germany was powerful enough to keep the two allies from falling at each other's throats.

The clash between Germany and the great Slav Power had far-reaching consequences both for the Slav area inside Germany—the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia—and for the Slav associates.

In the autumn of 1941 the unrest which for a long time had been observed in the Protectorate came to a head. On September 28 the Germans struck, dismissed their former Foreign Minister, now Reich Protector von Neurath, and appointed Reinhard Heydrich,

Germany's most brutal policeman, deputy Reich Protector. For some reason Hitler wanted to preserve decorum, and it was announced that von Neurath was retired on grounds of ill-health.

The most sensational move was the arrest of the Czech Prime Minister Elias. Then followed a wave of executions. By October 1, 123 Czechs had been executed, among them two generals and several well-known business-men; Elias himself was spared for a later occasion. Some of the 123 were hanged. Four came from a little village which by a whim of destiny happened to be called "Höllengrund" (Hell Ground). Later on a considerable number of former high officers in the Czechoslovakian Army and the former Mayor of Prague, Dr Klapka, were shot. The usual charge was sabotage, membership of secret national organizations, and contacts with the Czech émigrés in Britain.

In Croatia the situation became particularly delicate. The newly established State there which had come to life under not unfavourable auspices was not yet consolidated when conditions were at once upset by widespread partisan revolts. To this was added hard pressure on the Croat Government by the Italians—with the strange result that the Croats were compelled in the spring to accept a king from their arch-enemy. German-Italian rivalry provided further complications. The German endeavours to gain influence in Croatia may have been due to a desire for something to bargain with should it be necessary to make 'concessions' to the Italians, in connexion with France, for example.

In the beginning Pavelich had certain advantages. A representative of traditions dating from Croat nationalism of the nineteenth century, Pavelich personified a historic trend of his countrymen. But he had arrived in his country with a burden which became too heavy to bear. For one thing he had been forced to make ties with the Italians who had kept him during his long exile and now demanded large portions of Croat territory in return. Secondly, he brought with him from abroad eight hundred faithful followers, members of the Ustasha. These fellows were largely pure adventurers and gangsters. He failed also to reach a *modus vivendi* with Dr Machek, the man with a majority of Croats behind him. In less than six months the Pavelich regime proved a failure. It could not join in the war against Russia for lack of troops, but it sent volunteers to the Eastern front, the so-called Croat Legion.

Mixed feelings, to put it mildly, prevailed in Slovakia at the outbreak of the war with Russia. The Nazi-supported Tiso Government sent Slovak troops to Russia. Their behaviour at the front, however, left much to be desired. In Bulgaria Russian sympathies of long standing existed which the Soviet Government was able to exploit and combine with Communistic tendencies of considerable strength which dated as far back as the last war. The Germans complained that the Bulgarian masses had lost their feeling for the distinction between "the old Russia which had liberated Bulgaria and the Soviet Union whose aim was Bolshevization and thus destruction of the Bulgarian State and proletarianization of the people."

In any event a Bulgarian participation in the war against Russia did not materialize.

In the occupied countries the unfavourable effects were most marked in Serbia, Montenegro, and other parts of Yugoslavia. Moscow helped in fostering unrest through Pan-Slav propaganda. "Hold out until your Russian brother comes to liberate all Slavs," read a leaflet that had fallen into the hands of the Germans. The Serbs rose *en masse* and, under the leadership of Mihailovich, became more and more daring as time went on, rendering roads and railways unsafe. If the Germans managed to capture some of his followers or of the Communists who co-operated with him they made short work of them. Reprisals were also exacted in the proportion of a hundred for one if a German soldier was murdered. Such things had happened already during the war in April.

In the occupied non-Slav areas the situation equally deteriorated. This was partly due to the fact that the Germans were compelled to squeeze out of them more food and other goods, partly to the fact that the Communists, who previously had carried on an ambiguous policy both in France, Belgium, and Holland, and had sometimes rendered the Gestapo small services, now turned definitely against the Germans. Last but not least, the occupied countries felt encouraged when they realized that their overpowering enemy had met an opponent who obviously was anything but easily knocked out.

The first half-year of the Russian war brought a great number of other far-reaching changes in Germany's political situation. The

campaign absorbed many resources which previously had been employed on other fronts, with the result that German mobility decreased considerably. Many Germans had feared that the operations against Russia might involve a substantial relaxation of the pressure on Britain. That this was the case was already obvious during the summer of 1941. Figures of shipping losses decreased, and the air offensive over the British Isles ceased almost entirely. Berlin saw with growing concern how the British were beginning to 'gear up,' and how American assistance increased daily. Nor could one doubt any longer that America's active participation in the war was but a question of time. That America still was officially at peace was indeed to the advantage of Britain as well as of the United States themselves. President Roosevelt's order to fire at Axis ships forced the German submarines to give up a large portion of their operational area. Inch by inch the President moved his positions forward. Germans who had thought of the war in terms of a game of cat-and-mouse in which the Germans so far had always managed to play the part of the cat began to feel as if they were being turned into the mouse. Roosevelt knew—and Hitler knew—that at that time it was still impossible for the Nazis to declare war on America. Both of them knew, too, that the American President would go to any length before rendering Hitler the service of declaring war.

Germany's attitude clearly showed signs of an appreciation of these circumstances. Berlin's political circles were foaming with helpless rage at 'the provocations,' provocations that could not be replied to in the manner Germany would have adopted in other cases. At the same time, however, Berlin was very careful not to pass the limit, and German reactions were mainly confined to outbursts against Roosevelt (and not against America) which were so rude that we often found them unfit for publication.

As time went on things developed to a point where Berlin could not maintain a distinction between Roosevelt and his country. Then the world was told what the Germans or rather the Nazis thought of this country too, of America as a nation governed by Jews and gangsters, where lynching of negroes was the order of the day.

The situation became particularly critical on September 12 after one of Roosevelt's most vigorous speeches. Neither the German Press nor the German radio mentioned the speech. But in the evening, at the Press conference in the Ministry of Propaganda, the



Foreign Office representative did not mince his words. Since Munich, he said, the policy of the American President had represented an unbroken chain of actions which had led to the war. In various countries he had busied himself as a war-monger. The principal responsibility for the outbreak of the great war in 1939 rested with him. His order to fire on German warships was based on "lies, falsifications, hypocrisy, and pure invention." "Roosevelt has now," said Dr Adolf Halfeld in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* on the following day, "fired the starting pistol for the undeclared sea-war."

The Germans thenceforth followed developments in Japan with greater attention than they had done for a long time. The German Press pointed out with marked emphasis that Japan was threatened by the Allies but that she knew that a firm policy was possible.

A new crisis in German-American relations occurred at the end of October after the sinking of the destroyer *Reuben James* and Roosevelt's speech on that occasion. This speech was characterized as "vicious, ludicrous, and shameless" and the American President as a lunatic, a criminal, or a fool, or all three together.

One favourable circumstance for Britain was that she got time to build up gradually the position in the Near East which later on became so important. The Germans had not been able to do anything about the British occupation of Irak and were likewise compelled to remain passive in face of the march into Syria. The British thence commanded the whole area from Egypt up to Turkey. Persia still remained outside, but it was only a question of time before the need for a connecting link with the Russians in the South would enforce action against this country. This action took place no later than the middle of August with a British ultimatum to the effect that all Germans be expelled from the country.

To come to Persia's assistance was only possible via Turkey—that was clearly understood in Berlin. But in spite of all hints that the Sadabaad Pact obliged the Turks to help the Shah of Persia, and in spite of intimations that Turkey was actually threatened by the new development, the Turks showed no sign of wishing to intervene. Germany thus had to watch passively while Persia too was forced into the British Near East sphere of influence. Berlin's only consolation was the Soviet occupation of part of Persia—which gave the

Germans a propaganda point. At one time it looked as if Germany intended to check the British march in the Near East by an attack on Turkey. Rumours were current in September of large German-Bulgarian troop concentrations at the Thracian border and of Anglo-Russian troop concentrations at Turkey's eastern frontier. But the storm died down.

### *Germany's Internal Problems*

As I have already mentioned, the declaration of war on Russia was received with feelings of relief in Germany. The ambiguous relations with their neighbour in the East had weighed heavily on the minds of many Germans. It was with malignant pleasure that people contemplated how Hitler's associate of yesterday was becoming Churchill's of to-day. "Now it is his turn to dance with the Russian bear," was the comment.

On the other hand, many could not help laughing when Dr Goebbels began to talk in deep tones about the treason Britain had committed against Europe through her alliance with Soviet Russia. This argument only worked with those who could forget that Britain's new ally was Germany's former ally, or accept Goebbels' construction of a fundamental difference between the Anglo-Russian and the German-Russian pacts.

There were Germans who sat down to some hard thinking about this difference. I remember asking three well-informed and unprejudiced Germans, "Would you in 1940 have refused the Soviet Union as a comrade in arms had she been involved in war with the Allies?" They were honest enough to admit that they would not, with the dictum, "my enemy's enemy is my friend." They added, however, that Germany had not been fraternizing with Russia in the same way as Britain, hailing Stalin and striving to discover points of contact between the two countries. I replied that similar tendencies could be observed in Berlin at the time when Germany and Russia were in a rather equivocal liaison, and that nobody knew how things would have turned out had they become comrades in arms.

When the fighting with Russia broke out the German people were made to feel the war in earnest. Up to that point the home front had had a relatively quiet time, little disturbed by air attacks.

Soon after June 22 it became evident that the territory conquered

in Russia was not comparable with the rich, apparently inexhaustible reservoir of France, and that the troops could not be fed from the resources of the occupied country itself to the same extent as in France.

Many have already recorded how during the second half of 1941 daily life became more and more affected by the war—how the food situation deteriorated, and so forth. And it has rightly been pointed out that the change occurred quickly. I may, therefore, confine myself to a statement of fact.

The initial military successes were received with satisfaction and produced the impression that the war need perhaps not be drawn out too long. The Wehrmacht thrust deeper and deeper into the enormous Russian lands with unbroken victories. But when would it be *Victory*? This was the question the German public began to ask themselves. When soldiers came on leave from the front—which happened relatively seldom—and spoke about an enemy who refused to give in and who seemed to command unlimited material resources and reserves of man-power, people began to wonder. Casualties mounted up and at night, under cover of darkness, the hospital-trains crowded the lines. Rolling-stock, building-material, and other vital goods were gradually carried away to the conquered areas. In return came prisoners of war, long columns of ragged men.

Winter approached without a sign of slackening in the fighting. Already in August it was obvious that a winter campaign was inevitable. But not before September 11 was any official view given on this matter. It was explained that winter was not necessarily unfavourable to the Germans, as the most important operations would by then be concluded. The military spokesman admitted, however, that the main bulk of the German Army had no experience of winter warfare. This was communicated to us—the German public was told nothing.

By this time the leaders were getting worried, and forced preparations for the winter campaign were set in motion throughout Germany. But in comparison with the demand the quantities of goods available were infinitesimal. Yet Berlin had no idea of the extent to which the Russians were capable of carrying on the fight in spite of the cold.

Unrest grew among the people. The pessimists remembered Napoleon's war with Russia, and all the literature about La Grande

Armée suddenly had a marked revival. The fortune-tellers busied themselves with Napoleon's fate, and there was a boom in astrology. Finally the Press had to be mobilized to counteract the winter psychosis. Elaborate articles explained why there could be no comparison with 1812. "The first ten weeks of the war," said the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, "have shown that the resistance of the Soviet Army is tough and persistent. But, while the Russian generals who fought Napoleon in 1812 could withdraw to the Urals without getting into a hopeless plight, the Russian generals of to-day must comply with the dictates of the geographical situation. Industry and munition factories must be defended."

It was further pointed out that the German leaders did not intend to march on indefinitely and provide every village with a German garrison. The military aim was instead "to effect such a weakening of the Russians that Bolshevism will cease to be a menace to Europe." This was one of the first expressions of the more limited ambitions which became noticeable in Berlin after the first months of fighting.

Nazi propaganda did its best to check the depression. Realistic records of the misery in the conquered areas and horror pictures were published. A special appeal was directed to the German workers by showing, for example, 'workers' homes' in Soviet Russia. Every day the German public was told what they had been spared by Hitler's decision to attack.

Look at the quantities of Russian material, said the propaganda. Every one must realize that the Führer struck at the eleventh hour. The people were willing to accept this theory. Hitler was still sacrosanct. But the Party was criticized more and more. In particular, the development of German-American relations caused anxiety. The propaganda outbursts against the U.S.A. and the polemics against the American armament figures were eloquent for those who cared to listen. Was this not the psychological preparation for another 1917?

Even the most devoted Nazis did not want a war with America. All Germans had a high respect for her strength. Nobody could help remembering how America's intervention had decided the first world war. The 1917 perspective was uncomfortable.

Many Germans knew, in spite of all assurances to the contrary, that something similar was bound to occur again. This realization made people more sceptical of the regime. The Party kept itself

well informed about the shiftings of public opinion and began to take secret precautions.

The foreign correspondents felt it immediately. The application of the many Press restrictions suddenly became more stringent. The tone towards the Americans, who up to that time had been privileged and even admired, changed. But the new atmosphere affected the other neutrals too, if all journalists in Berlin from non-Axis countries may be included in that category. Suspicion grew, and supervision was tightened up. Foreign business-men were also subjected to increased surveillance.

New campaigns were launched against listening in to foreign broadcasts. They were supported by police raids, and the spreading of rumours that the police were in possession of a sounding apparatus which could detect not only that a radio was switched on, but also the station to which the owner was listening. When a police raid had been successful it was hinted casually that the police had been guided by this apparatus.

But even the German radio could be dangerous. Moscow began suddenly in the autumn to produce a ghost voice in the German programmes. It was alleged in Berlin that the owner of the voice was a German Jew in Russia. He did quite well for several weeks, compelling the German announcers to read at the top of their voices and at such speed that one could not understand how they were able to breathe. The Germans retorted. One day a malicious voice was heard in the B.B.C. quite outside the programme. I was listening to a broadcast from Canada via London when somebody broke in shouting clearly, "How much are you paid by the Jews?" and, "Why don't you tell the truth?" When the British announcer reported that some German planes had been shot down by the R.A.F. the 'guest' added, "which lost nine planes in the action." At times he tried to produce diabolical laughter, at times the two announcers spoke simultaneously. A similar voice appeared on the Rome radio preaching anti-Fascism to Italian listeners. But after a short while the radio front became quiet again. Perhaps both adversaries found this kind of war far too embarrassing.

In spite of increased police supervision—S.S. posts were established in corner buildings and empty shops all over Berlin—it soon became obvious that war-weariness was growing. Public morale in particular deteriorated. Bartering began to flourish, especially when

a tobacco shortage set in and enormous queues gathered outside all the tobacco shops. More and more sales articles disappeared completely. The stock phrase of the shopkeepers was "everything for the Forces" whether it was the question of sweets, spirits, or stockings.

Another sign of the changed atmosphere was the resumption of the anti-Semitic campaign. In September the 'Star David' was inaugurated for the Jews, and Dr Goebbels wrote one anti-Semitic article after another. The purpose was partly to prepare the German people for a war with America—which, according to Nazi doctrine, was dominated by the Jews. A family tree was produced to show that Roosevelt himself was a Jew. But, on the whole, the campaign had purely materialistic aims. Nobody could believe that the, for the most part, aged Jews who still remained and had tremendous difficulties in keeping alive, constituted a menace to the German people. But they had something precious, and that was house accommodation. It was said frankly that the increasing shortage in this field made a removal of the Jews to the eastern areas necessary. The fate they suffered there or on their way there is common knowledge.

But the Berlin people reacted to the Jewish Star in a way which must have given the propagandists a good deal to think about. Now and again there were small demonstrations *in favour* of the Jews, and the stoic calm with which they bore their fate did not fail of its effect even among the most fanatical Nazis.

It would be wrong to claim that the situation in Germany in the autumn of 1941 was critical. Certainly the war in Russia got more and more on the nerves of the public. But although people felt ill at ease when the big operations in the East did not lead to definite results, they doubted that the Russians—whose defensive strength was admitted without reserve—would be able to launch an offensive against the German Army. The Army was still invincible in the eyes of the German people.

A foreign observer noticed, however, the speedy and continuous consumption of all reserves. Civilians had to reduce their purchases; and no expert knowledge was necessary to understand that supplies were getting limited for the Forces too, and that Germany's thus far dynamic strategy would become static, even while Britain, the principal enemy, was beginning to recover.

### III

#### WINTER 1941-42

##### *Pearl Harbour: German Declaration of War on the U.S.A.*

THE SECRECY ABOUT THE INTENDED ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOUR WAS strictly preserved. That the situation in the Far East had for some weeks been extremely tense was certainly known in international circles in Berlin. It was known, too, that the Germans had for some time nursed expectations with regard to the attitude of Japan. But when discussing this well-informed Germans said they had assumed that Japan would act in accordance with Germany's wishes—in other words, help in defeating the Soviet Union by stabbing her in the back or, perhaps, attack Britain. That the Japanese should direct their principal blow against their most dangerous enemy was at that time not contemplated by the Germans, who wanted America to be kept out of the war and entertained hopes that this might be possible.

The attack on Pearl Harbour indicated that the Far Eastern Power had considered her own interests, and that Germany would have to pay for temporary relief if it involved war with the United States. The impression during the first few days was also that the Germans had not been informed by their Japanese ally until the last minute, and that the enthusiasm in Berlin was at the beginning very moderate. When the Japanese later on proved successful to an extent which nowhere had been anticipated feeling changed again in the Wilhelmstrasse.

The Japanese in Berlin—with the exception of the Ambassador, General Oshima, and one or two of the staff—may not have known that the Japanese war would start when it did, and as a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour. But the Japanese journalists were evidently informed of the gravity of the situation. On the evening of December 6 one of them became hopelessly drunk and began to toast the Japanese-American war. "It will break to-morrow," he said. Nobody took any notice as he was known to be a toper and sometimes said peculiar things.

The day after Pearl Harbour was a strange one. The Americans were downcast, although not yet knowing the full extent of the

catastrophe. One of them, a friend of mine, said, "We needed something like this to make them understand at home that it means business."

Americans, Germans, and neutrals all considered open war between America and Germany inevitable. Already on December 7, however, it was quite obvious that the Germans wanted to hold back a little in the hope that Roosevelt would free Hitler from the necessity of declaring war on America.

The 8th passed and the 9th without Roosevelt's declaring war. On the 10th Schmidt opened the Press conference in the Wilhelmstrasse by asking all the Americans to withdraw and advising the representatives of the foreign Press from now on not to consider them as colleagues. The Americans got up quietly and went out. Schmidt, standing at the door, shook hands with each of them, beginning with the veteran Berlin chief of the Associated Press, Louis P. Lochner.

The Press conference then went on in a tense atmosphere but without sensations. Lively discussions followed as to what was going to happen. People with special contacts were able to report that the Reichstag had been summoned for 3 P.M. on the same day, and that Hitler then—after Japanese exhortations—would issue the declaration of war. But nothing happened. On the next day, however, tickets for the event were available at the Ministry of Propaganda. It turned out that the date on these tickets had been altered from the 10th to the 11th.

There were not as many cars as usual outside the Kroll Opera. The restricted petrol allowance for official cars was making itself felt. Nor were there many people, but it was a long time since Reichstag meetings had drawn large audiences.

The ceremonial was the usual one, and so was the public. Some prominent foreign guests were seen in the boxes, among others the Grand Mufti in his picturesque robe and striking headgear. Mussert was there, and Quisling had a seat of honour. He looked very proud.

Hitler entered, greeted by the regular well-disciplined ovations. After a few words of introduction by Göring he began to speak. He disclosed some incredibly small figures of German losses in the Eastern campaign, which had come to a standstill for the moment but which he promised would be resumed. Then he went on to deal



with America. It was characteristic that for half an hour Hitler dwelt on the President's personality and his wife. And he did this in such coarse language that the applause was hesitant. Not a hand moved in the long row of Field-M Marshals, Generals, and Admirals. I looked at the officials of the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda to see whether they too found the show as disgusting as did the foreigners. Most of them applauded the 'witticisms' enthusiastically. But others squirmed in their chairs and looked slyly at each other and at us, while Hitler roared out his hatred of the American President—"the cripple"—and his wife.

Finally, when the paroxysm of hate was over the announcement came—in one of those typical 'calm' periods which in Hitler's speeches always followed after the screaming and always had an extraordinary effect on the listeners: the Reich Foreign Minister had handed the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America his passport. Then the whole assembly applauded; even Admirals and Field-M Marshals now had to join in.

Hitler went on to thunder against those who tried to disturb the home front, seemingly addressing people not present in the Kroll Opera. But a strange silence fell. The audience fixed their eyes on the generals and did so even more when Hitler said with strong emphasis, "Behind me—I am certain of it—stands the Party, which has become great through me and through which I have become great." The striking thing about this statement was not the pompous tone, but the question it involved—why only the Party? Did not the armed forces stand behind their Commander-in-Chief and the people behind their Führer? The words carried an unmistakable warning. But to whom? Part of the answer was to be publicly known a few weeks later.

I have attended quite a number of German Reichstag sessions, but none was more depressing than this one when the declaration of war on the United States was announced to the German people in such undignified terms.

We Scandinavians took, of course, a special interest in the fate of our American colleagues. In reply to questions it was explained that they would, in accordance with German practice, be treated as members of the diplomatic corps provided the United States acted in the same way towards the German journalists in America. The day before, the Americans had been confined to their quarters. Now

they were transferred to a boarding-house for further transport to temporary internment in Bad Nauheim. An exception was made in the case of old Guido Enderis, of the *New York Times*, as his health was poor. This courtesy was rather natural, Enderis being the doyen of the journalistic corps. He had done his share of internment during the last war.

The die, then, was cast. The German people received the announcement with quiet resignation and without the slightest sign of enthusiasm. It gave many people sinister presentiments; parallels were drawn with the first world war. Above all, the certainty that the war would be a *long* one now gripped the German people. Its outcome must have seemed doubtful even to the most optimistic in spite of Japan's initial successes, which had been considerably greater than at least the common people in Germany had dared to expect.

In North Africa, since the end of November, a violent fight had been raging between the British and Rommel. The latter seemed to be mastering the situation, though Berlin was at times reserved in the face of enemy superiority. But the situation in the East caused real anxiety.

### *Catastrophe threatens in the East*

On December 7 reports came from Russia which rivalled the Far East sensations. On the 6th the temperature dropped to 40 degrees centigrade below zero on the central front, suddenly paralysing the offensive. The High Command announced on the 8th that operations in Russia had practically ceased owing to the winter and that "on large sectors of the Eastern front only local encounters have taken place."

At a Press conference Captain Sommerfeldt admitted that the winter had set in earlier than had been counted on, and that the cold rendered any employment of Panzers impossible since even the oil froze. The fall of Moscow could therefore not be expected in 1941.

That the situation was critical became at once obvious. The tanks got stuck and had to be blown up, great quantities of lorries were lost, and the Germans were in full retreat, abandoning considerable material, in the face of a Russian counter-offensive launched along the whole line from north to south.

The powerful Russian attack was a genuine surprise to the German Government. They had not reckoned that the Soviet leaders

could command the necessary resources for organizing a large-scale attack, least of all in a temperature which—in German opinion—forbade any military operations. In addition, it seemed clear that the Russian offensive was carried out according to a carefully laid plan. The Germans themselves admitted this later on.

So serious was the situation that informed circles in Berlin expected the German front in the centre to be smashed up. An atmosphere of catastrophe took hold of the German capital and particularly of the various Government departments. The prospect of a Russian victory became a reality also to the neutrals who thus far had assumed that the Germans would in any case manage to hold the Russians. In fact, for a few exciting days the whole German Eastern front was at stake. That the crisis could nevertheless be overcome and the Russian advance gradually be brought to a standstill was due to the German soldier. In the face of an entirely new kind of warfare, in a climate unfamiliar to most of them, with a total lack of suitable winter equipment and arms, the German soldiers achieved the incredible against the pressing Russian masses. A large part of the credit for the stabilization of the front must also be ascribed to Hitler's obstinacy. His military advisers counselled retreat. But even if it is assumed that Hitler was right this time he cannot escape the responsibility for the mad scramble in the autumn which exhausted the German war machine. Although the front was at last consolidated, this winter battle spelt a severe reverse for Germany.

Once out of the battle, the soldiers used soldiers' language to express their fury at their miserable equipment. The equipment of the German forces had been boasted the best in the world. But it now turned out that, while Russian troops appeared in fur coats and felt-lined boots and hooded snow capes, the German soldiers' winter outfit was often confined to a white cloth round the helmet. In addition, the German Army completely lacked winter training and practice in night fighting and forest tactics. There were some Alpine units, but they were trained for operations entirely different from those applicable in the Russian wastes. The absence of winter training was of course an inexcusable omission on the part of the German High Command. It was just as decisive a mistake as the underestimation of the tank weapon by the British and French military leaders.

The men at the front felt the bitter irony of the German High Command's explanation that the Army had carried out 'correcting movements' and withdrawn to a 'winter line.'

Something had to be done. Dr Goebbels had to step in. In the evening of December 20 he made a radio speech in which he announced that between December 27 and January 4 a gigantic collection of winter equipment for the Wehrmacht would be carried out.

Equally eloquent was the appeal by Hitler which the Minister of Propaganda read out.

Dr Goebbels touched only lightly on the reasons for the collection. The German Wehrmacht, he said, had made really big efforts to provide the soldiers with winter equipment. But winter had arrived earlier than they had counted on and despite all efforts the equipment was still not secured. He finished with an urgent appeal to the solidarity of all Germans. The absence of winter training was, of course, entirely passed over.

The speech fell like a bombshell among the public. Many asked where was Dr Dietrich and was it not reasonable to expect winter at the beginning of December—it was bitterly cold in Berlin by that time. The dominating feeling was, however, that destiny's wing had touched the German nation in a way so far not experienced during the war, and that catastrophe was in the air. The prospect of the Russian masses welling in over Europe made even the most fanatical anti-Nazi prepared for sacrifice. The collection campaign actually produced a moral shake-up.

But another shock was in store for the German people. On December 19 I read a telegram from my London colleague saying it was known in London that Hitler had dismissed von Brauchitsch and personally assumed command of the Army. This accorded with a long-felt presentiment in Berlin, particularly after the Reichstag meeting, that a conflict had arisen between Hitler and his generals. None of my informants in Berlin knew anything about it, but on the 21st it was announced in the evening that Hitler had decided to take over the command of the Army in person and had issued a proclamation to the troops. In spite of the late hour I tried Sommerfeldt on the telephone. He told me to go to hell—I was the tenth to call—but after some parleying he calmed down. His comments, however, were meagre—not a word was allowed beyond the official

announcement. "Don't get yourself into trouble by exceeding the communiqué!"

During the next few days some evasive comments were produced. Sommerfeldt, having obtained proper guidance, asserted that there had been no question of a crisis. Hitler's assumption of the High Command signified a strengthening of the position of the Wehrmacht. The move had been planned a long time ago and was in fact nothing more than a formal registration of the established fact that Hitler was Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and, therefore, of the Army. "On him also rests in future the main weight of the military operations." It was further intimated that Hitler had personally worked out the plans for the invasion of Norway, the war with France, and the campaign against Russia. The explanation issued by the *Deutsches Nachrichten-Büro* stated that the German Reichskanzler had exercised a decisive influence on the equipment and the operations of the Army. He had followed his intuition and reserved all important decisions for himself.

After that there was silence, and when questions were asked the only reply was that the matter was closed. But a wave of rumours concerning the von Brauchitsch incident swept Berlin. The reasons for the conflict were already becoming fairly clear.

In 1941 Hitler considered himself "the greatest strategist of all time," to quote the ironical expression used two years later in many quarters in Germany. Undoubtedly the developments in the autumn of 1941 bore traces of his intervention. Dr Dietrich's performance and the precipitation of the offensive on Moscow were clearly nobody's work but Hitler's. His attitude was natural in a person whose guiding star had been the principle "to make the impossible possible." This had been achieved on several occasions for the simple reason that the impossible had only seemed impossible. But this was not the case in Russia. The Germans may well have been so near success in the Moscow sector that it was theoretically possible to reach the city before the winter. But this is not decisive. The decisive factor was the existence of the Russian reserves. Their underestimation revealed dilettantism in the German High Command.

Unlike his predecessor, General von Fritsch, Field-Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch was certainly no military genius. But he was a good representative of the Prussian officer class. He belonged to an old aristocratic family from Silesia with military traditions and was

educated in a soldier's home—his father having been a cavalry general. Von Brauchitsch's record in the last world war was honourable. Promoted major, he was taken into the newly established Reichswehr, where he rose rapidly and was made a major-general in 1931. After Hitler's assumption of power von Brauchitsch played a considerable part in the organization of the new German Army and especially its crack units. On February 4, 1938, he became Commander-in-Chief of the Army. There was nothing splendid about him, and he had no decisive influence in politics. But he was generally respected as an able officer who showed up favourably against his too adaptable colleague Keitel, and who enjoyed great confidence throughout the armed forces.

Von Brauchitsch had disapproved of Hitler's entire tactics during the autumn of 1941. It was said, and has later been confirmed, that violent clashes occurred repeatedly between him and the Führer. Von Brauchitsch was by no means alone. A number of generals who left their posts at the same time as he strongly opposed the offensive on Moscow. And even Göring did so. Developments proved that von Brauchitsch had been right; but this may only have increased Hitler's anger. It is rather astonishing that the crucial conflict did not take place before December. Be that as it may, Hitler apparently wanted to use as scapegoat the man who in fact had seen the position more clearly than he had. After von Brauchitsch's dismissal the Party began to spread the rumour that actually the generals had wanted to take Moscow at any cost in 1941, while Hitler had warned against it and had only unwillingly accepted their plans. When the fiasco became apparent he had been forced to take over the command in person. This convenient version was torn to pieces by Hitler and the political commentators themselves when it was pointed out that Hitler had for some time personally commanded the Army and exercised the main influence both with regard to its equipment (winter equipment, for instance) and to its operations. With this the responsibility was obviously pinned down in a way that was going to be difficult to throw off later on.

The crisis was not solved by von Brauchitsch's dismissal. A number of the highest officers declared their solidarity with him, among them the Field-Marschals von Rundstedt, Ritter von Leeb, von Bock, and List and the Generals Guderian and von Kleist. All these left their posts.

Christmas 1941 was gloomy. The many casualties in German families were felt more deeply in the festive season, and the material restrictions were so considerable that it was difficult to procure what was necessary for Christmas celebrations in anything like the traditional style. Extra ration allowances were, however, possible even this year.

One thing made this Christmas appreciated in a particular way, and that was the fact that most Germans got a few days off. At the end of 1941 the effects of the deteriorating food supply and the increasing war work began to show in growing physical weariness. For days ahead people spoke of nothing but how they would sleep over Christmas. But the state of exhaustion was, of course, not nearly so advanced as it was a year later.

Fighting in the East went on throughout January under extreme difficulties for the German High Command. The 'winter line' that had been talked about in December was nothing but a geographical term; its real course varied according to operations. The German soldiers had a gruelling time. The quarters were appalling, and when they managed to find a human dwelling it was—according to German reports—alive with millions of lice.

The Russians attacked fiercely along the whole line. Apart from the centre, the situation became particularly dangerous in the Crimea where the Russians took advantage of their absolute naval superiority for carrying out landing operations. Kerch and Feodosia were taken fairly quickly in a surprise attack while repeated attempts to land troops west of Sevastopol, especially at Eupatoria, failed against the efforts of the German defence. But the situation became complicated for the Germans in the Crimea because supplies had to be taken across the narrow Perekop isthmus and Sevastopol's fortress and powerful naval port were still in Russian hands.

In spite of the Russians' throwing in fresh troops from Siberia, who could endure the extreme cold better than the European units, gradually a rather stationary fighting zone developed. This was reflected in the fact that the German Press, which so far had carefully avoided any topographical definitions in Russia, in the middle of January mentioned a number of names in such a way that it was possible to visualize a front line: from Taganrog in the South to east of Kharkov, Byelgorod, Kursk, and Orel and thence to the

Kaluga area; from the east of Mojaisk across Lake Selguer, Valdai, and Lake Ilmen up to Schlüsselburg, and finally in a bend to Leninograd. The Russians had certainly managed to infiltrate at several points behind this front line. Above all they had succeeded in establishing a deep salient between Kholm and Toropets. This was also confirmed by Captain Sommerfeldt in January 25. He reported the gap as fifty-five miles broad. But the Germans had obviously been able to hold the big towns. These not only served as breakwaters, but also provided garrison accommodation for the German troops, which was all the more important as German building-material was bad and insufficient.

About mid-January the worst crisis could be said to have passed, but the situation was far from stabilized. Sommerfeldt was hard put to make sure that to-day's statements corresponded with his statements of a week ago. What he said made—in spite of his efforts—sometimes an almost macabre impression on those with a long memory and good notes. On January 21, for example, he admitted that the Russian winter was Stalin's best ally, and that the Russians could reckon on the climate as favouring their operations up to March.

While there were setbacks in the East there was still German superiority on the North African battlefield. The British offensive at the end of November and the beginning of December had made relatively small progress and did not seem to justify the initial British jubilation. Much irony was expended in Berlin on Churchill for having counted his chickens before they were hatched. It looked, in fact, as if the British Prime Minister had let himself be carried from his usually realistic and cautious attitude.

At the end of January Rommel was again able to launch one of those lightning counter-attacks of which he had proved a master and to force the British into retreat with big losses. Military quarters in Berlin stated on the 25th that the British were in full flight eastward and that confusion was spreading among them like waves after an earthquake. Only with the greatest effort could Rommel be halted off Tobruk.

### *New Propaganda Technique: The Great Effort*

When it became obvious that the situation in Russia was catastrophic Goebbels decided to embark on an entirely different line of



propaganda. The previous sanguine attitude in which first Britain's and then Russia's strength had been belittled gave way to a painting in gloomy colours. The new technique was certainly not carried out in detail, but still distinctly enough to spur the German people on to greater efforts through *fear*. Descriptions appeared of what would happen to Germany should the British and Russians win. The change was too sudden for many Germans, but at the same time the propaganda was laid out so skilfully that the man in the street was bound to draw the conclusion that all resources must be mobilized. A convinced opponent of the regime said to me, "If the Russians get as far as East Prussia then I'll get out my rifle too." Goebbels took great pains to mix his colours in such a way that defeatism would not result.

The winter collection was exploited to the limit for propaganda purposes. Every day the papers showed pictures of popular personalities (film and sports stars in particular) as donors of garments of various kinds. Famous, even historic, fur coats were reported as sacrificed for victory. The collection, which should have been concluded on January 4, was extended to the 11th in order to "give all those who had not had time to get their gifts ready the opportunity to join in." The final result was given as more than fifty-six million different garments. Equally important was that the collection really brought about a stiffening of public morale.

But propaganda had also to be adapted to another factor—the mentality of the soldiers at the front. It was necessary, Goebbels told himself, that what they said when on leave should reasonably accord with the announcements of the Government. Since the scales had fallen from many eyes at the front, above all on account of the absence of winter equipment and of faulty dispositions, a possible criticism had to be turned in the right direction.

The fact that Hitler had been a front-line soldier was exploited in repeated assurances that his heart was bleeding for the troops, and that he himself was living as simply as they. It was further said—which was certainly true—that Hitler took an extremely harsh line with those who were not experiencing the war at the front. The propaganda began—in cautious terms—to play on the eternal contrast between battle front and home front. In order to meet the soldiers' criticism, criticism was launched against the civilians. There was one publication in particular which was given this task—the S.S. paper *Das Schwarze Korps*.

This paper, which was published once a week, on Wednesday, had adopted a tone calculated to suit the soldiers at the front. When Goebbels set out on his new propaganda line the paper's language became even more coarse and sulphurous. The result was often a shocking discord, giving readers the feeling that the writer had never smelt powder. On the other hand, front-line soldiers were allowed to write on problems of morale—and then the impression was certainly genuine.

On the whole, it is fair to say that the acid criticism presented on behalf of the front by *Das Schwarze Korps* made the paper a good safety-valve for the discontent among the troops. There the whip was cracked over the 'depot mentality,' the war-profiters, the bartering, and the black-marketing, bureaucracy, and everything else that was an abomination to the German soldier in Russia. In this way *Das Schwarze Korps* gained a very special influence.

The new propaganda signals were flashed in Hitler's New Year proclamation, read out by Goebbels on New Year's Eve over the German radio. And they recurred in the New Year meditations of the German Press. "The war had become harder."

Certain changes were also noticed in the German foreign propaganda. There were even signs of an altered attitude towards the small peoples. They had previously been treated rather haughtily and informed in schoolmasterly tone of what the new Europe demanded from them. But now Dr Karl Megerle wrote in the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, "Germany does not wish for a Europe of compulsion but for a Europe of mutual goodwill."

After the severe setbacks against the Russians the German people were looking with some excitement to the next official appearance of their Leader. He had been expected to speak at the memorial service for Field-Marshal von Reichenau on January 23. But that did not happen. Göring spoke instead.

A series of rumours circled round von Reichenau's death. Well-informed persons were able to report that he had been visited by four high S.S. officers and had after that 'expired.' Others maintained that he had died in a hospital in Leipzig. A police officer stated that he had been murdered by the monarchists. What really happened is beyond my power to say. There was probably some sort of foundation for the rumours—the official verdict of death gave the

cause as heart failure, but the deceased was known throughout Germany for his extremely good physique and his achievements at sport.

On January 30, the ninth anniversary of the Party's assumption of power, Hitler spoke in Berlin's Sport Palast. The congregation was the usual élite of faithful Party people. But contrary to previous occasions some forty high officers were present, obviously in order to give this appearance a more official character.

It was a new Hitler who presented himself to the public and the foreign Press. Colleagues who had been in the position to study him over a period of years, before I went to Germany, said immediately, "You can see that he has had his first serious reverse." We could distinctly trace the course of events in the German Reichskanzler's worn features and uncertain attitude.

Hitler had certainly always seemed hesitating in the beginning of his speeches and needed at least half an hour to get going. But this time it was more noticeable than usual. He started by saying that he had thought it better to return to from whence he had come—the people. Then followed the traditional review from 1918-19 and onward. Gradually he worked up to his opponents and fired off a record salvo in low taste. Churchill was a "chatterbox and a drunkard," Roosevelt a "deplorable lunatic." As at the Reichstag meeting in December, many people in the audience squirmed.

Finally he got to the main point. Not the Soviet forces, he explained, but the intense cold with the thermometer at 45 degrees centigrade below zero had forced the German armies to halt and take up a defence line (the word 'retreat' did not appear in the speech). The difficult operation had now been successfully concluded, said Hitler, and "when spring comes" the Wehrmacht would resume the general attack. "The hardest time is behind us."

It was now necessary, declared Hitler, that the home front should produce a maximum effort. Exceptional steps would be taken to increase production. Hitler concluded with a passionate appeal to every one in industry, transport, and so forth to do their utmost.

A tremendous mobilization of all man-power reserves had already been started in the beginning of January. The barracks were filled again and intense training set in at top speed. Large numbers of

workers were called up—in their place were put prisoners of war and foreign workers. Shopkeepers had to shut down and join the Forces together with crowds of students previously exempt. Even the Ministries were forced to give up large portions of their staff—the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda each provided a battalion. The men were picked out by the establishment-officers, who had to make sure that the prescribed number was delivered. Naturally the Ministries—perhaps most of all von Ribbentrop's and Goebbels'—lost many of their best people. Left behind were the physically defective, who frequently had mental defects also, and those who were on good terms with their establishments; in other words, often the petty-minded and the schemers.

As a link in the current mobilization an announcement was made according to which all former officers of "German blood or akin" who were now German citizens and had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Army, the Austrian Confederation Army, or the Italian, Czechoslovak, Polish, Belgian, and Yugoslav Armies, should report to their local police stations.

The mobilization of man-power reserves was followed even before Hitler's speech by a move for the exploitation of all available technical and economic resources in order to replace lost war materials and speed up production to the maximum. On January 27 Ministerialdirektor Mansfeld was directed to raise new contingents of foreign workers for Germany—it was estimated that over two million workers were already employed there. At the same time it was announced that recruiting offices were to be opened in the Ukraine, and forced labour was to be introduced in the occupied countries. Trainload after trainload of men and women arrived from the Baltic States—some of them enlisted by masked compulsion, others enticed by conditions which looked very nice on paper. During the first days of February the first Russian civilian workers arrived, too, among others a contingent of miners from Krivoi Rog.

Female labour was employed to an increasing extent, particularly as substitutes for called-up civil servants. In February it was said that a forced-labour order was under preparation which would mobilize practically all German women.

The slogan of the new mobilization of resources was given as "Rationalization" or "Concentration." Now, in 1943, an interesting

parallel could be drawn between the action described and that in the following year. It then appears that both in 1942 and 1943 it was not only the question of speeding up production but also, with the assistance of propaganda, of giving the German people compensation for the reverses sustained by inducing a feeling that the nation's strength was concentrated and increased.

### *Military and Political Problems in February*

The changes in the military position in February 1942 were insignificant. The Germans had still to beat off strong Russian attacks under difficult weather conditions. The Russian losses were, however, considered so high that Berlin hoped the Russians would bleed white through their winter offensive.

The Russian troops attacked with extraordinary fanaticism and regardless of losses. Their tactics were very embarrassing—simultaneously with frontal thrusts they infiltrated the German lines or rather the zones which were controlled by the Germans. Gradually the Germans succeeded in mastering the Russian tactics by creating 'hedgehogs' at vital points in the terrain. They were defended by units up to a division and provided with ample supplies. From the 'hedgehogs' the Russians could easily be exposed to flank threats. On the other hand, the supplies of the German citadels had to be replenished mainly by air. This was possible in 1942, but could not be kept up in the following year.

On February 22 the German High Command published statistics of the results of the fighting from January 1 to February 20 in order to forestall expected Russian figures on the Jubilee Day of the Red Army, February 23. The number of Russian prisoners was given as 56,800. This figure was remarkably moderate.

No figures were given for the German losses. That used to be reserved for Hitler at his official appearances. But there was no doubt that the German losses were extremely high. They were possibly—in spite of the favourable position of the defenders—only a trifle lower than the Russian losses, as the number of frost casualties in December and January was on a record scale. A small wound when the cold was 40 degrees centigrade below zero, and the soldier had very little chance of surviving. It may be added as a comparison that the German military writer, Lieutenant-Colonel Soldan, in a



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radio talk, gave the Russian losses of men *killed* for two and a half months as 800,000-1,000,000. Well-informed Germans calculated that the winter war had cost Germany at least 350,000 men killed. This figure is probably far too low.

The winter campaign had shown that the Russians were capable of extensive offensives in spite of their losses. It had further shown that the consumption of German troops and German material in the East was considerably larger than Nazi Germany had experienced before. The lines were beginning to stiffen. The dreaded blitz tactics gave way to what all German experts had warned against—the war of attrition.

At the beginning of 1942 great hopes were placed on submarine warfare. The American lack of war experience favoured the German submarines, and the extension of the range of action which was carried out by different methods resulted in a rapid increase of Allied losses, particularly in tonnage sunk in American waters. An increase was in any case to be expected at the beginning of 1942, since the Germans during the latter half of 1941, in the face of the threatening outbreak of war with the United States, had withdrawn their submarines from large areas of the Atlantic. But the increase became more rapid than had been calculated. It looked, in fact, for some months as if the submarines would paralyse the Allied conduct of the war. The sinking-figures were followed in Berlin with the greatest excitement and compared with the reports on Allied new building which arrived there through various channels. Towards the end of the spring it became clear, however, that the grip of the U-boats was somewhat slackening.

Simultaneously, developments in the Far East war zone were studied with close attention. The German public felt greatly encouraged by the swift Japanese successes which seemed to shake Germany's principal enemy, Britain, to her foundations. With Singapore as base, the Japanese fleet had mastery of the whole Indian Ocean, said Berlin, and leading Party circles contemplated the possibility of direct contact, in one way or another, with the apparently irresistible Japanese. In this connexion great hopes were in particular attached to Rommel.

That the German battle-cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* succeeded by a daring coup in slipping through the Channel naturally did not contribute to increasing Germany's respect for the British.

Where is the British Navy? asked Berlin. Sober observers, however, belittled the military importance of this exploit.

Politically February was relatively uninteresting. At the beginning of the month Quisling was elevated to 'Ministerpresident' as a reward for the faithful services he had rendered the country which had attacked his own. But his position was, in fact, not changed by the appointment, and many Germans were heard to express their deep contempt for the man and his activities—at the same time admitting with cynicism that they intended to exploit him to the utmost. Hitler was, however, said not to share the personal aversion to Quisling but to entertain the same preference for him as for all the other *mauvais sujets* who had run errands for the Third Reich.

There had been some talk about a formal peace between Germany and Norway—that is, Quisling—but nothing more was heard about it. An incident may be related from a Press conference in the Ministry of Propaganda when Grundvig Gundersen, the leading representative of the "Q-men," as we called them—in other words the quislings—protested at the top of his voice against somebody's having asked something about the "quislings." The expression, he said, ought to be "members of the Nasjonal Samling." But before any of the Germans could reply a colleague interpolated quietly, "Are you ashamed of your lord and master?" A few days later a Swiss colleague asked what was the percentage of the Norwegian population which stood behind Quisling. A murmur of expectation went through the room. After a painful pause the conference leader, Dr Brauweiler, turned to a different subject. Herr Gundersen had had nothing to say this time.

Already in 1941 Hungary had begun to put up a more independent attitude. The Hungarians had never been very popular in Berlin, where complaints of their obstinacy and intractability had been heard for several years. Now came more and more signs that Hungary began to feel herself strong enough to consider her own interests more and Germany's less. When the question of a deputy for Admiral Horthy became imminent Germany was especially interested. Neither of the two principal candidates was liked by the Germans. One of them was Istvan Horthy, the Regent's son. The other was the Archduke Albrecht of Habsburg. Horthy's candidature was open to grave objections. According to German opinion,



there were strong indications that his political views were anything but pro-German, that he possessed a will for independent action and—good contacts with Britain and America. He had spent some time in the United States as an ordinary worker and also had personal relations with Britain. With regard to the Archduke, he was certainly a Habsburg, but could perhaps be played against the head of the family, Archduke Otto, whom Hitler had always considered as enemy Number One.

The Hungarians, however, made some small concessions, and in return no objections were raised by the Germans when, on February 19, Istvan Horthy was elected as his father's deputy.

At the beginning of 1942 German difficulties piled up in the Balkans. The partisans were harrying troops, and supplies and communications were interrupted for periods. In Greece famine reached such a pitch that it looked as if the entire Greek people would starve to death. Other serious disturbances were added. The tramways in Athens had to stop owing to the shortage of coal. And the evening papers ceased to appear for lack of paper.

The internal situation in Germany showed some improvement in February 1942. The creeping anxiety over the situation in the East slowly began to recede and was followed by a more hopeful mood. The rationalization campaign had some positive effects by impressing both Germans and foreigners that the resources of the country were concentrated. Bombing attacks had not been very severe during the winter. The exceptionally bitter cold which contributed to the deterioration of morale—during December and January Berliners had experienced quite a different temperature from what they were used to—began to give way, and thoughts of spring brought with them some, though only slight, improvement in the general feeling.

But wild rumours flourished constantly, and the well-tried methods were not adequate against them. An event which very strongly occupied the mind of the German public was the air crash in which Reichsminister Todt, one of the foremost Nazi leaders, was killed. This was possibly a sheer accident, but people in Germany had been accustomed for a long time to assume that the official versions of deaths of public figures were incorrect and produced in order to conceal crimes or suicides.

## IV

### SPRING 1942

#### *Lull*

THE RUSSIAN WINTER OFFENSIVE CAME TO AN END IN MARCH. A period of passivity set in which would last for two full months. That was, however, not immediately clear. Journalists in Berlin expressed the opinion that everything so far indicated Hitler's intention to fulfil his promise and start a general offensive as soon as possible in order to have the longest available period at his disposal before autumn and winter would again turn the balance to the advantage of the Russians. That he would succeed in obtaining any decisive result seemed very dubious, but it was nevertheless assumed that the Germans would be able to inflict great losses on the Russian Army and gain territory. Above all, they were tipped to reach the Caucasus.

Early in March it became clear that large-scale German offensive preparations were in full swing. A new road system was built up by the Organization Todt in accordance with a plan by the 'motor dictator' Werlin. I was told by an expert that road stability was provided for simply by mixing cement or some other binding material with the mud and then letting the steam-rollers go ahead. Thousands of trains with brand-new material departed eastward, and stores of fuel and food were piled up behind the front.

The first April days brought indications of German activity to straighten out the front. But neither side embarked on any large-scale operations as the period of the melting of the snow was drawn out well into April. The airfields were seas of mud, the roads, the whole landscape a sludgy swamp. The enforced passivity came in very handy for the Germans, who needed to reorganize their badly mauled and depleted units.

Neither the Mediterranean nor the European mainland saw any bigger military undertakings in the spring, apart from the war in the air. The British attack on Lübeck at the end of March came as a shock to the German public, since Lübeck was one of Germany's historic towns with unusually well-preserved medieval buildings.

Reports of the destruction raised an anger to which the attack at the end of April on Rostock, when this town was laid in ruins, added fuel. The R.A.F. then continued to deal out hard blows on Baltic ports such as Kiel. In Lübeck and Rostock the Heinkel works received serious hits and were compelled to move part of their production. But damage to residential quarters, supplies, and so forth was worse. The German authorities were forced to evacuate the two towns practically completely—an additional burden to all the other problems of organization.

These British air attacks had in themselves hardly any adverse effect on German morale. The effect became adverse only when it turned out that the Luftwaffe was not allowed or was not able to retaliate with large-scale counter-attacks on Britain's cities—the so-called Baedeker raids were only pinpricks. Apparently Göring's proud weapon was no longer strong enough to be in full action both in the East and the West. The air war against Britain was not intensified, in spite of the fact that air activity on the Eastern front could be restricted owing to the weather and the operational lull. The only thing which was intensified was the Press cannonade and the promises of retribution. Berlin even went so far as to slacken the extremely rigorous regulations for the treatment of British air raids by the foreign Press—in order to make it possible for foreign correspondents to express indignation at the attacks.

The enemy's military preparations were watched with lynx-eyes in Berlin. Since the opinion was held that the Russians themselves could only partially replace their lost material, the Allied transports to Russia became at once extremely important. The Northern route was considered the most vital, and the logical consequence was increased submarine warfare in the Arctic. From bases in North Norway the Germans kept guard on all transports in northern waters, and, although the Allies tried to skirt the ice-limits as closely as possible, the Germans were in general successful in their convoy attacks both when the ships were on their way to Murmansk and on their return. The Allied shipping losses in the North must have been very heavy.

In the spring of 1942 a lull also prevailed on the diplomatic front. The Germans made no serious attempts to recruit any new allies—if the Bulgarian King on his visit to the German headquarters on

March 24 was subject to any attempt to make him intervene actively in the war against Russia the answer must in any case have been in the negative.

On the other hand, Germany had during this interval difficulties in maintaining peace between her two confederates, Hungary and Rumania. The conflict ensued from a speech by the Rumanian deputy Prime Minister, Mihail Antonescu, at the University of Bucharest on March 19. Points in this speech were: the Rumanians were the guardians of civilization at the mouth of the Danube; cognizance of this had taken them to Budapest in 1919 "in order to suffocate the Communistic breed created by the then Hungarian Government which threatened to endanger the whole of South-eastern Europe." Hungary had now broken the Press truce between the two countries and insulted the Rumanian Army; she had committed "attacks and provocations" during the past year, harassing and persecuting the population in Northern Transylvania, destroying churches, etc. "It is our duty to declare that this cannot go on any longer."

The storm which this attack evoked in Hungary can easily be imagined—the reference to the Rumanian march to Budapest in 1919 could only be understood as a studied affront. The Hungarian Government ordered the Press to keep silent, but let the Germans know that if they could not hold Rumania in check then Hungary would not take responsibility for the consequences. Tension was aggravated by a number of frontier incidents—sixty-four in the course of a few days—and by the comments on Antonescu's speech in the Rumanian Press, which did not mince matters. "We have," said *Timpul*, for example, "long kept silent with clenched fists and gnashing teeth, but we shall forget nothing." And *Unirea* wrote: "In our Army's trumpet calls sounds also the call about which nothing yet can be said, but which will one day be the sign of revenge for the humiliations." Troops marched up along both sides of the border—the Hungarians in marked superiority, since the Rumanians had a large part of their armies tied up in Russia.

The Germans managed by an extraordinary effort to prevent an open conflict. A clash would at once have broken up their whole system of alliances, since Germany herself would probably have taken the side of her favourite, Rumania, and Italy that of Hungary. Many, moreover, suspected Mihail Antonescu of playing a double

game—through provoking a war with Hungary he wanted to get out of the difficulties of the situation and above all the bloody campaign in the East. But thereby he possibly calculated on winning the gratitude of the Allies at a peace conference; a Hungarian-Rumanian war would obviously involve a blow against the whole German position in Europe.

However that may be, Germany was still strong enough to forestall open hostilities between the two countries.

On several occasions during the spring a meeting between Hitler and Mussolini had been anticipated. It did not take place until after the meeting of the German Reichstag in April. A communiqué containing the usual phrases was issued on May 1. It was assumed in Berlin that a major point of discussion had been an action in the Mediterranean, and official commentators stressed with marked emphasis that the position of the British there must be considered precarious. The Mediterranean action materialized when Rommel a few weeks later launched his attack on the British lines.

Otherwise, the principal question in Berlin during March and April was India. Rarely was so much eloquence expended on journalists as when Messrs Schmidt and Braun von Stumm day in and day out delivered lengthy lectures, nay, sermons about the shabby behaviour of the British towards the poor Indian people whom Japan—and Germany—wanted to liberate. Arguments were repeatedly used which were bound to cause amazement at least among us Scandinavians—applied to Germany's own neighbours they would have meant that Germany should have evacuated the occupied countries and liquidated the quisling regimes, etc.

But Japanese and Germans had, of course, in the case of India a quisling of their own. The former Mayor of Calcutta, Subhas Chandra Bose, was in himself no insignificant figure. As a tool for Germans and Japanese, however, he has naturally some difficulty in playing an independent part. In Germany, where he lived for some time, he spoke over "an unknown radio station," as the mystic expression went, to the peoples of India, and each time official Germany rejoiced at the effect this was considered to have. A beautiful publication devoted to the interests of India was issued in Berlin, and Habibur Rahman, a journalist from Delhi who had landed in Germany, ran a vehement campaign of propaganda for the liberation of India.

Every day it was forecast that the Indian question would bring about Britain's imminent downfall. On April 14, for example, it was explained that Cripps' failure signified "the dissolution of the British Empire," and that "Britain's historic rôle is played out." Now, the British Empire had certainly been dissolved on several occasions before in the Wilhelmstrasse. But the persistent barrage which was maintained this time gave many observers the idea that Germany and Japan were preparing a common action to reach direct contact with each other, and that Berlin therefore wished at any cost to keep India in the limelight. The question became really important later on when Rommel threatened Alexandria. Such a development was hardly anticipated in April, and not only the Scandinavians but all journalists yawned when one of the quislings had carried out his task of questioning "if there were any new elements in the Indian problem," thus letting loose another flood of eloquence.

A little later the problem of Vichy also came up in connexion with the Indian question. Pétain had, in the middle of April, given in to the German pressure and appointed Pierre Laval as Prime Minister. When the British, early in May, suddenly attacked Madagascar—with the object of forestalling its being used as an offensive base against India—the Germans made strong exhortations to Vichy to force a French declaration of war on Britain. Laval also began to use violent language, but suddenly held his tongue when President Roosevelt declared his solidarity with the British and made it fairly clear that war with Britain would mean war with the United States—neither Pétain nor 99 per cent. of the French people wanted that.

### *Growing War-weariness*

During the period of waiting the problems of the home front gained in significance. It was obvious that morale had deteriorated considerably as compared with the situation only half a year ago. Public feeling was certainly not constant, quick changes would take place at times, but they were ripples on the surface. The general tendency was downward.

The German leaders were aware of the necessity of keeping the public occupied and of counteracting the rising war-weariness. In the Ministry of Propaganda conference followed upon conference on

this subject. Opinion seems to have been very divided. At last a decision was made in favour of a further development of Goebbels' new tactics.

This meant, broadly speaking, the following. The keynote should be sombre and all accounts of the situation 'realistic.' The word recurred in the introduction to every subject.

The danger from the East was stressed, but also the fact that it could be overcome through great popular efforts. The foremost of these efforts would be the spring offensive. Its aims were not clearly defined. It was intimated, however, that it was not so much a question of smashing Bolshevism as of pushing it back so far "that it would no longer be a menace to Europe." Thus the possibility was left open to stop at some 'quarantine line.'

With regard to the length of the war, nothing more was said than that it would be long. Watchful observers could draw their own conclusions from the exhortations for endurance and private explanations along the lines that "he would win who could keep alive a quarter of an hour longer than the enemy." Gradually the propaganda turned to the idea of defence: the "Fortress of Europe" which would be able to live on its own resources indefinitely—in other words, would be 'blockade-proof.'

The extended Goebbels tactics, if this expression be allowed, had also a recipe for the internal difficulties. Previously belittled or simply ignored, these difficulties were now being talked of 'frankly.' Reading Goebbels' own articles in the spring of 1942, I had the feeling that these new tactics in the internal sphere were one of his outstanding achievements.

The 'frank' and 'realistic' approach comprised starting from the existing public feeling and its various shades and treating them one by one—but from such an angle that they appeared quite natural and of relatively little importance.

The keynote was given by Goebbels in an article in *Das Reich* early in February, where he recapitulated the causes of the collapse in 1918. "It is easy enough," he wrote,

to believe in victory when the radio is producing special communiqués about new victories hourly. It is a different story in times of setbacks. The general attitude of the Germans is, however, not affected by the fact that everybody feels the need to let



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off steam now and then. One complains about the cold, another about the potato shortage and the coal shortage, a third about the overcrowded trains, a fourth about the Eastern front, and the fifth about the war in Africa. This is not so terribly dangerous. We are all just overstrained and therefore a little irritable.

This train of thought was varied in practically every issue of *Das Reich* and certainly had some effect. But gradually Dr Goebbels turned to admonitions.

We have every understanding for the fact that many of us are a little overworked and therefore more than usually irritable. But nobody is for that reason entitled to demonstrate his bad temper from morning till night. A pleasant, friendly, and encouraging word in the right place works miracles even with a disgruntled person. The home front should here follow the example of the soldiers.

It could, doubtless, be observed that the soldiers were different. "Why is the civilian Müller so infinitely more troublesome than the soldier Müller?" asked the well-known journalist Schwarz van Berk, and pointed out that "he who is discourteous is throwing sand in the war machinery."

True, the Berliners were never renowned for politeness and agreeable manners. But this spring their behaviour became almost intolerable. Many did not feel in good fettle unless they had at least one 'bust-up' a day. It was the same thing everywhere. The immediate reasons were perhaps varied, but it always came back to—the war.

It was therefore necessary for the propaganda leaders to apply some special measures. Goebbels chose to seize on the impoliteness as such, without touching its causes. The newspapers in the German capital began to impress on their readers that the war demanded politeness from them. Before long it was announced that May would be made into a special "courtesy month." "Courtesy is oil on the troubled waters of every day," said one paper. "People look after their stamps and their canaries," said another, "but nobody seems to realize that courtesy is an ideal healer of nerves." "The worst thing is when courteous people start trying the method of teaching the discourteous courtesy by discourtesy."

On May 5 Dr Goebbels announced a "courtesy competition" for the people of Berlin in a proclamation in which it was stated that

courtesy and kindness are necessary conditions for peaceful intercourse between men. Some lengthy harangues followed, in the cajoling tone always used by the Nazi authorities in addressing the population of Berlin, to the effect that Berliners were *of course* polite. But in order to stimulate an increased politeness Dr Goebbels instituted forty awards for polite Berliners in various occupations.

The courtesy campaign could have but limited effects. Many made a point of sabotaging it by every possible artifice. But so far the purpose was accomplished in that the campaign diverted attention from what was in fact the essential—the German people's doubts about victory and about their leaders.

The growing war-weariness in Germany, and particularly in Berlin, became evident in a deteriorated morale where supplies and business were concerned. People in happy possession of something to eat or to drink, or of clothes, furniture, and other precious goods, could demand anything in exchange. In the shops customers were treated as though they were dirt. They had to approach the assistants with humble petitions, while the latter distributed their favours as they pleased. In restaurants the waiters ruled like gods, and a complete system of favouritism grew up in many places.

Black-marketeering assumed enormous proportions. Bartering flourished freely. Every one mobilized his assets. Money counted for little, but those without bartering-objects had to pay considerable sums.

The job of coping with the deterioration of civilian morale in general and commercial morale in particular was given to *Das Schwarze Korps*. Suddenly this paper openly criticized institutions and individuals and exposed to the public (with names and addresses) businesspeople guilty of some impropriety, both cases punishable according to the law and cases which nominally kept on the right side of the law. The paper did not content itself with pillorying the accused in its columns. It pleaded incessantly that the actual regulations must not be interpreted literally, but that the judges should follow summarily the thesis proclaimed by Hitler: "He who would profiteer by the war must fall."

Treating the matter publicly implied, of course, certain disadvantages. One was that *Das Schwarze Korps* was read with magnifying glasses by all foreign journalists, and that in this way a number of

internal problems which previously had been taboo could be dealt with by the Berlin correspondents.

The editor of the S.S. paper was several times urged to use phrases which rendered our exploitation of the material more difficult. And to us it was explained how highly undesirable it was that we should 'slaughter' *Das Schwarze Korps* in the way we had done so far. The effect of such a warning usually only lasted until the following week, at least with us Swedes—after that we were on the same theme again. But the authorities dared not at that time impose a prohibition against using the paper. The only remaining alternative was to make *Das Schwarze Korps* more moderate, which was consequently put into effect.

It was quite entertaining to read about all the smart people who tried to get things 'without,' as was the technical term for everything that could be had without coupons. *Das Schwarze Korps* had a considerable staff—it comprised anyone. Everybody who had something on his mind was asked to report it, with the result that the whole business smelled of a scandal-sheet. Yet not every story was accepted. Usually, though not always, the paper took the trouble to check the information. But it did not matter so much if somebody who was innocent happened to be stigmatized as a black-marketeer—for who would have dared take any measures against *Das Schwarze Korps*?

Sometimes when a hiatus in the law had been uncovered in a letter to the editor the authorities issued a supplementary regulation. But often the public branding was the only means of getting at the delinquents. *Das Schwarze Korps* kept a particular eye on the different trade publications. If a big photographic firm advertised in the grocers' paper that they had plentiful stocks the question arose as to why in the grocers' paper? If then a tobacconist or a spirit merchant also appeared with an advertisement the matter was clear—as no such firm needed advertising to dispose of its products. The extent of this sort of barter transaction was enormous. Many went further, telling their customers that they had nothing to deliver, but that, perhaps, they could "talk it over." In other words—let's see what tobacco, spirits, or whatever it is you have, and we shall certainly come to an arrangement.

When the authorities could catch the traffickers they struck hard, usually with the death penalty. Butchers especially had to make

their way to the gallows. At the end of March two nurses in Königsberg were condemned to death for a private racket with foodstuffs destined for the nursing-home where they were employed. The death penalty was further meted out to many Germans who had tried to print their own ration cards, a rather easy operation as the official ration cards were very simple. The police did not, of course, intervene with the many and big thieves in the Party. Stories grew about racketeering in higher circles. Finally *Das Schwarze Korps* felt obliged to issue a warning that people liked best to see important personalities pilloried, and that "the small man's solidarity" went into action when the small thieves were caught. The class struggle slogans had not been entirely smothered by years of National Socialist 'education.' When it came to a high official, Party-man, or manager a different note was struck. Persons with this mentality were scrutinizing all verdicts on black-market men and racketeers, and should the sentence be five years' imprisonment instead of the death penalty, then they were ready to believe that the jury had had a cut off the 'black-market hams.'

### *Concentration of Power against the Opposition*

Although the war morale in general showed a downward trend and there were many signs that the authority of the leaders was decreasing, there was not yet any large-scale opposition.

The Nazis, furthermore, took precautionary steps against rebellion. Raids were organized on Communist agitators, and a great number of arrests were made among the bourgeois intelligentsia. An eyesore to the Nazis were, however, the judges, who did what they could to prevent pure arbitrariness—in those cases when the accused came before them at all. Demands for a 'clean-up' in the judicature had therefore been raised at an early stage in Party circles.

Even if an action in the sphere of legal administration had been generally expected it nevertheless caused astonishment when Hitler made this the principal subject of his Reichstag speech on April 26.

The disclosure that a Reichstag meeting was intended to be held at the end of April let loose the most exuberant spate of rumours I have ever experienced in Berlin. It was fairly clear that a review of the completed winter campaign would be given. But for the rest people talked of a new generals' crisis, of an attack on Turkey—even

Sweden was mentioned in this connexion—and of an announcement of the big new spring offensive in Russia.

The Reichskanzler seemed to be in better spirits than in January. Contrary to his habit, he went almost straight on to the principal item—or, at any rate, what seemed to the audience to be the principal item—that is, the winter campaign. He revealed that a disaster had been threatening, but had been averted, and that he had had to intervene personally with a firm hand on certain special occasions in order to set the machinery going. He admitted indirectly that he counted on another winter campaign, by mentioning that next winter the German Reich railways would be prepared in a way entirely different from that in 1941 to prevent a repetition of the catastrophe which the severe Russian winter of 1941-42 had represented.

Then came the surprise of the day—the interventions he had undertaken had been made “with the sovereign rights I have been given by the German people.” Yet Hitler went on to request for himself a formal authority from the Reichstag to keep everybody to their duties and to remove anyone who did not fulfil his obligations, regardless of rank, office, and position. Everything must be mobilized for victory, and nobody had a ‘legal right’ to vacations. Those who above all had earned a vacation were the soldiers at the front. “Personally I have not had three successive days off since 1933.”

The question against whom this unique power in modern European history would be used was partly solved by the forceful indictment of the German judicature which Hitler then delivered. The courts were there for the benefit of the nation and not vice versa, he said. He added some further similar truths, strongly applauded by the audience, who looked relieved to learn that only the judges were mentioned expressly.

Göring spoke after the Führer. This most devoted henchman of Hitler usually restricted himself to a short personal tribute to the Führer. But this time he was a little more elaborate and surprised everybody by a rough sketch of the campaign in the East in much gloomier hues than Hitler himself had painted. If the front held, he said, it was not only the result of the soldiers' gallantry, but to a large extent the merit of the Reichskanzler, who had “restored order” even in those days “when everything looked hopeless.”

When the foreign Press men left the Kroll Opera between the

smart cars of the Party bosses and the parading troops, a vivid discussion about the significance of the new authority ensued. We did not really know what to think. During the following days even many well-informed Germans were at a loss. Many expected another June 30, others interpreted it as an outflow of the 'dynamic tactics' which constantly demanded 'new energetic measures,' whether these were commanded by the actual situation or not.

The new authority was not favourably received by the people. Ironical comments were heard from the most varied quarters—at times mingled with fear for the consequences of this power concentration. The new authority in itself hardly altered the actual situation very much. But fears were expressed that the tightening up might be carried farther after the speech.

Well-informed people pointed to one circumstance which might explain Hitler's move—the new concentration of power increased his control over the armed forces. So far they had been fairly out of the reach of the Gestapo, and the officers at least had tried to stick together. Now they too were exposed to their mercy.

Events have to a large extent justified this interpretation, although it does not include the full explanation. The Gestapo's power was obviously increased. Hitler's warm tribute to the S.S. units was also eloquent. Himmler's star was rising.

But it was also said that the whole affair expressed an endeavour to strengthen Hitler's personal authority. There lies another part of the truth. A remarkable example of the same tendency was an article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of May 10 by Colonel Walter Scherff, a well-known military historian who was produced from time to time to bear witness that Hitler was one of the greatest strategists in history. The article began by quoting Schlieffen to the effect that no rising military star has escaped opposition, not even Frederick the Great or Napoleon. Hitler's assumption of the High Command on February 4, 1938, was not, said Scherff, dictated by ambition but by the consciousness of an inner call and a desire for responsibility. Von Reichenau's words in 1939, describing Hitler as "the first soldier of the Reich," had nevertheless caused astonishment and had in many quarters been considered an undue anticipation of the big test. But Hitler's capacity as a strategist was beyond all doubt, said the Colonel, and as an indication of this he referred to the situation early in 1941 when the cold took the German troops

bysurprise. Several times then it was suggested that it would be better to retreat immediately on a broad front, thus also shortening the supply lines. "The picture of the situation of 1812 was already conjured up, paralysing both commanders and troops." Then Hitler intervened. "Never was he seen so determined." His motto was fight to the utmost. The article ended up with a quotation from Clausewitz: "There is a striking peculiarity about great strategists in the face of disaster—that they give up as little as possible, rely on themselves and their good fortune, and play for time without incurring great losses. If that succeeds then we are inclined to think it was all definite calculation and clear deliberation, though it first seemed only a dubious gamble."

It was obvious before long that the regime had stiffened up the course in home waters. A number of arrests were made, executions increased daily. Firm measures were adopted against rumour-mongering, which had seen a veritable boom in the spring, particularly in connexion with leading personalities who had died. The rumours even made impertinent approaches to Hitler's person. A story went the rounds that he had been the victim of an attempt at the end of May, and that his left arm had been wounded. One or two young officers were said to have been involved and executed. One of the most typical stories was the one about Mölders, Germany's ace fighter pilot who was said to have broken with the Party before his death, after his sister, who was a nun, had been thrown out into the streets by S.S. men while they were 'evacuating' a convent. Copies of an alleged letter from Mölders to a Catholic priest in which he confessed himself a faithful Catholic were also circulated. This was, of course, a big scandal and *Das Schwarze Korps* was ordered to deny it.

During the spring a number of measures were taken against the churches, which were considered the most dangerous enemies of the National Socialist State. When possible the moves were defended by the necessity of restrictions due to the war. Most religious publications were cut off from paper supply and had to be suspended. Religious literature could no longer be printed, even Bibles and hymn-books were affected by the restrictions.

The Catholic Church was considered the most dangerous owing to its solidarity and international relations, but it was easier to get at the Protestants, who had much to endure. Usually their protests

did not reach the public. A letter to Goebbels from the Landesbischof of the Evangelical Church in Württemberg was, however, circulated in thousands of copies.

The Württemberg Bishop spoke his mind forcefully. He referred to Goebbels' own article in *Das Reich* entitled "Frank Talk" and explained that he intended to talk frankly to the Minister of Propaganda. First of all, he demanded justice in the distribution of burdens for the Christian part of Germany's population too. He therefore protested against the interference with the Christian Press and literature, while anti-Christian literature was poured out on the market and to the front in great quantities. The measures taken against the Christian population were nothing but an incessant abuse of their tolerance. One outrage followed upon another, said the Bishop, and existing law was disregarded. None of those in a leading position heard the cries of the oppressed. Since the end of December 1941 a memorandum had been lying on the Führer's desk from the Evangelical Church leaders and the Catholic Episcopate, and he had written personally on the same matter both to the head of the Reichskanzlei and to the Führer without getting a reply.

Meanwhile, continued the Bishop, the Party's hostile propaganda against the Church was going on unhindered. The Russian people were being told that Adolf Hitler and the German Army had restored Christian freedom of religion. "Your children are being christened again, your marriages blessed! Down with the system which has polluted your churches!" But at home in Germany the population was being importunately exhorted not to take part in any church ceremonies. Was this contradiction tenable? Was the victory of an anti-Christian ideology more important than the victory of the German people? Was the present State to enforce a uniform doctrine upon all its subjects?

Finally the Bishop urged a fundamental change of policy towards religion and cessation of the "senseless ideological incitement against the Christian faith, of the fettering of the Church, and of the violation of the Christian conscience, particularly the conscience of those who had thought it possible to combine membership of the Party with co-operation in the Church." That a war, the issue of which to such an extent meant the country's very existence, should be exploited in order to divide a fighting people over religion was—to use a favourite expression of to-day—unique. ('Unique' was one of



Hitler's favourite expressions.) "I beg urgently that also the Christians who comprise the overwhelming majority of Germans should be favoured with some sign of that solidarity between Government and people the existence of which you so emphatically assert." The Bishop's *démarche* had, of course, no effect.

Police measures were not the only ones employed in order to prevent the development of an opposition. The Nazi leaders also tried to counter the new situation with ever new forms of propaganda. One was the institution of special awards for armament workers. The first were conferred with great ceremony by Göring on May 21 in the Reichskanzlei. The ceremony itself seemed to make a strong impression on the workers and peasants present, especially the conferring of the high award, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. It was given to foreman Hahne, as "a thankful acknowledgment from the battle front to the home front," and handed over by a corporal who himself had the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

Another effective idea was the exhibition called the Soviet Paradise in the Lustgarten, in Berlin. It was a 'guaranteed genuine' collection of Russian homes—the most appalling dirty outhouses crammed with rags—which were represented as having been fetched from Minsk. Thousands of people streamed there every day. The stench was terrible, and many withdrew as fast as they had arrived. Some people were perhaps susceptible to this kind of 'direct propaganda,' but there were many who saw through the trick.

On May 27 an attempt was made on the Soviet Paradise exhibition. The culprit was not found, but among what the German police used to call the "spiritual originators" some hundreds of Jews and communists were executed.

This became quite commonly known and was resented. When the exhibition was closed the following story spread round Berlin with blitz speed:

"Why was the Soviet Paradise closed?"

"Because the people of North Berlin wanted to get their belongings back."

## V

### EARLY SUMMER 1942

#### *Munitions and Supply*

THE LULL ON THE EASTERN FRONT LASTED LONGER THAN HAD ORIGINALLY been anticipated. The delay was largely due to the unusually long winter. The propaganda turned the much advertised German spring offensive gradually into the 'summer offensive.' The interval was replete with elaborations on the enormous German armaments.

No doubt, the resources of the German nation were employed to an extent which was only surpassed by the total mobilization in the following spring. A committee for the co-ordination of all orders of war materials and for further concentration and simplification of production was set up. The committee comprised a number of high officers and leading industrialists. A few weeks later a special Board of Munitions was established with General Thomas as its chief. As the Board was answerable to Reichsminister Speer the latter became in fact German armaments dictator.

An increasing control of industry had been introduced after the New Year in 1942. In February the papers reported that two production managers had been sent to concentration camps for alleged misuse of their workers. A rigorous price reduction for all munitions added to the difficulties of the managements.

The grand-scale migration of production which had been planned long in advance began to take place during the spring. Certain vulnerable factories had long before been removed to the Generalgouvernement.<sup>1</sup> But now the development of Upper Silesia into an East European Ruhr was started. The plan included the doubling of the capacity of the iron and steel industries and an increase in coal-mining from 100 to 150 million tons annually. Elaborate schemes were drawn up for supplying the district with iron ore from Krivoi Rog in the Ukraine, bauxite from Hungary, etc. Electrical power was intended to be provided by expansion at different waterfalls in Germany, in the Protectorate, and in the Generalgouvernement. Furthermore, tens of thousands of workers were to be sent

<sup>1</sup> 'Generalgouvernement' is the German name for occupied Poland.

to Upper Silesia. The plans were put in action and speeded up later on in 1943. The principal reason for the undertaking was the damage to vital industries by Allied air raids.

The acceleration of German arms production demanded a mobilization of all reserves of raw materials. In May all stocks of iron and steel in industry—with few exceptions—and in skilled trades were confiscated. At the end of the month a new clothes collection for munition workers was arranged. The directions for the collection pointed out that nothing should be spurned. Every rag would find a use in the textile industry. "All out for a general wardrobe inventory," was the motto. Simultaneously the collections of waste paper, etc., in the schools were speeded up and official departments received rigorous orders on the same lines. This collection of waste was, of course, an expensive method of providing raw materials. It involved the employment of tens of thousands of people. But the shortage in different branches had become so serious that emergency measures were inevitable. The problem of man-power could, to a certain extent, be solved by the importation of foreign workers, which was organized throughout most European countries. A decree by Gauleiter Sauckel at the end of June, according to which change of occupation must be approved by the Arbeitsamt (Labour Exchange) made the German workers practically villeins. At the same time attempts were made to save man-power by standardization, simplification, and de-bureaucratization. Civilian consumption was still more restricted by a series of drastic steps. At the end of May it was announced that all manufacture of machinery except for essential war production should cease. This embargo also included printing machinery. The newspapers were further hit by stringent paper rationing and from June 1 were cut down to four pages as a rule.

Traffic was heavily curtailed, restaurant cars were withdrawn, permits for sleeper accommodation were restricted, and goods traffic for civilian purposes was also cut down. Simultaneously new methods for loading and unloading were tried out. The combined efforts resulted in considerable quantities of various materials being made available. Some entirely new weapons of war were also turned out.

While an improvement of Germany's munitions position was thus achieved a food-supply crisis approached which to foreign observers appeared to entail the possibility of imminent disaster. Perhaps we exaggerated the difficulties of the situation. But the winter had been

abnormally severe. The cold had destroyed a considerable portion of the winter crops—Staatssekretär Backe gave the figure of two and a half million hectares. The crops had to be resown and a large proportion of the potato stocks designed for consumption had to be used for sowing. The rye crops were particularly badly damaged, and wheat had suffered heavily from the snowless winter in January, from frost in March and April, and from drought later in the spring. Central Germany, between the Weser and the Oder, suffered most.

The spring work was delayed four weeks, and the labour supply had not increased. The prospect was then a food crisis some time during the year or the following spring. German households had already received a clear warning through the marked deterioration of the bread during the winter. Many people thought that it would have been better to cut the bread ration instead of lowering the standard with all sorts of substitute ingredients. The black bread which preponderated was not very healthy for sensitive stomachs. It had to be toasted to be tolerable, but then it became very unsavoury. Other reminders of the food problem had also been given during the winter. The potato shortage has been mentioned above. In addition, more water was mixed in the milk, and vegetables began to disappear from the market. The possibilities of supplementing, by means of coupon-free foodstuffs, the scientific minimum which the German rations were considered to provide began to be exhausted. The many wisecracks about those who tried to do the impossible—that is, to live on the rations—suddenly became cold reality.

Most serious was perhaps that the rations, this scientifically calculated minimum, were reduced by a stroke of the pen. From April the bread ration was cut from 2250 to 2000 grammes a week, the meat ration from 400 to 300, and the fat ration from 269 to 206.

It looked, in fact, as if the food question had become one of the most serious problems. But the crisis was solved at least to some extent by the good harvest which, in spite of everything, was brought in in 1942, and which came as a positive surprise even to the experts.

### *The Operations in the East*

New weapons said to be at the disposal of the German forces were the main item in German military propaganda during the early summer. The theme was pegged on Hitler's words about "new

and better weapons," and fantastic stories were spread by hundreds of small 'indiscretions.'

Neutral observers in Berlin were also of the opinion that Germany would very probably start using hitherto unknown weapons. At the same time it was remembered that new weapons had always become topics of discussion as soon as a lull occurred at the fronts. Caution, therefore, commanded a certain scepticism.

There were, however, good indications of the existence of the so-called 'atom gun,' and that turned out to be correct. Very well-informed persons reported that this machine hurled out shells by means of highly compressed air, and that the shells contained a new explosive which killed a great number of people over a certain area, leaving no traces behind. But before the gun was brought into action it was added that this gun was very dangerous to the crew, that only volunteer officers were allowed to handle it, and that its effect was restricted. Furthermore, the production costs were described as fantastic, economic employment of the gun thus only being possible against mass-concentrations of enemy forces.

The début took place in the local action which the Germans started on May 8 against Kerch, where big forces had been grouped in a confined area. The operation was preceded by a concentration of heavy weapons unusual even in this war, and was opened up by a German air bombardment of the well-known brand. Two thousand bombs were dropped on a single sector in one day.

It is therefore difficult to appreciate the part played by the 'atom gun' in the Kerch operation. The Germans would probably have reached their target in any case with the assistance of their terrific regular artillery and strong bomber forces. Nevertheless, the 'atom gun' obviously had a not inconsiderable effect among the densely massed Russian troops on the peninsula. A few days later the reaction came from the Russian and Allied side: "The Germans are using gas in the East."

What is meant by gas can, of course, be debated. By all evidence the Germans were right when they averred that the Geneva Convention paragraphs on poison gas were not applicable to the new instrument. But after Churchill had threatened in a speech that the Allies would retaliate with gas war the matter was no longer a question of interpretation of the Geneva Convention. In face of the prospect of gas war Hitler sounded the retreat. On May 12 the

spokesman of the High Command declared that Germany intended to respect the agreement not to use gas as long as her adversaries did the same. He added that he "had the impression" that Churchill had based his pronouncement on Russian reports about the new German weapon, the effects of which on the Russians had created "the misconception that gas had been used."

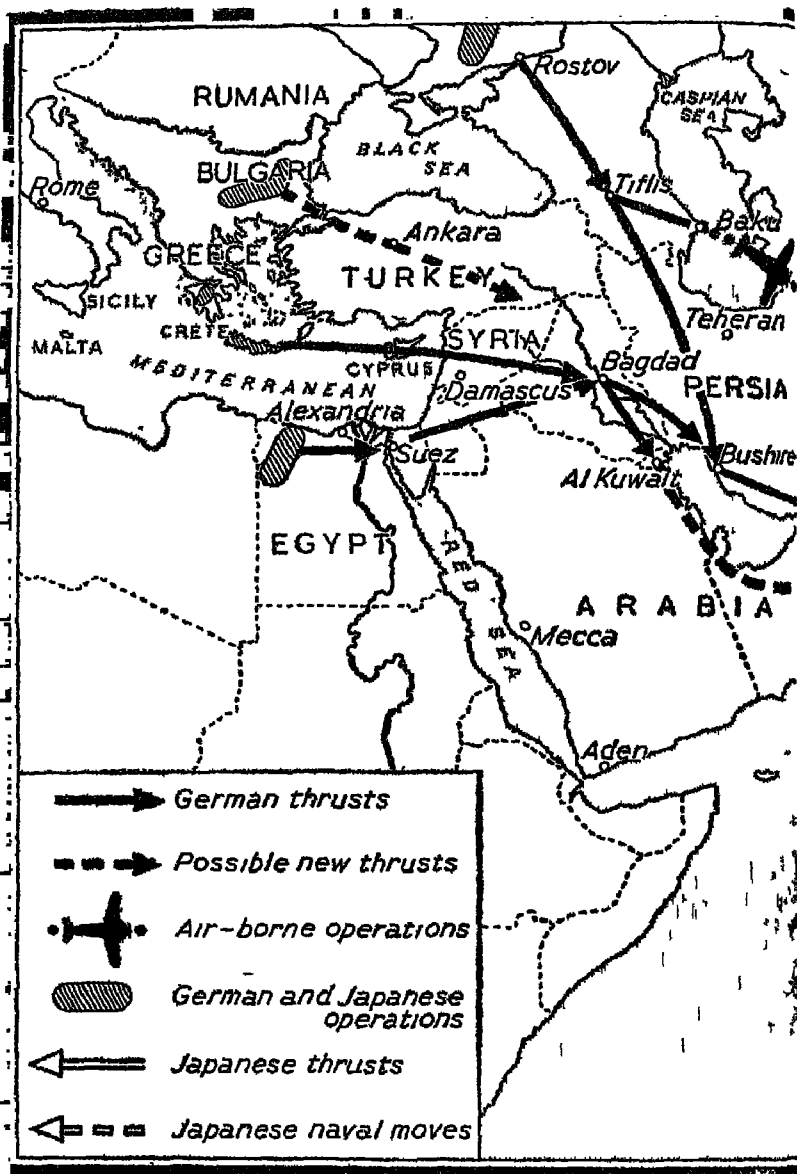
The new weapons were sufficient, he continued, to safeguard victory in the East. But in spite of his and other officers' bold statements about them, Kerch remained the only place in the East where evidence of their use to any notable extent was provided.

Kerch represented a typical preparation for a bigger offensive, but before the Crimean operations were concluded the Russians surprised the world by taking the initiative on May 12. Timoshenko made a large-scale attempt to pierce the German positions south of Kharkov and managed to establish a relatively strong wedge. Its base was, however, too narrow, and after a week's fighting the Germans were able to carry out big counter-attacks from the north and the south with the result that Timoshenko's crack army was caught in an oblong sack south and south-west of Kharkov. At the end of May the German High Command was able to report a great victory.

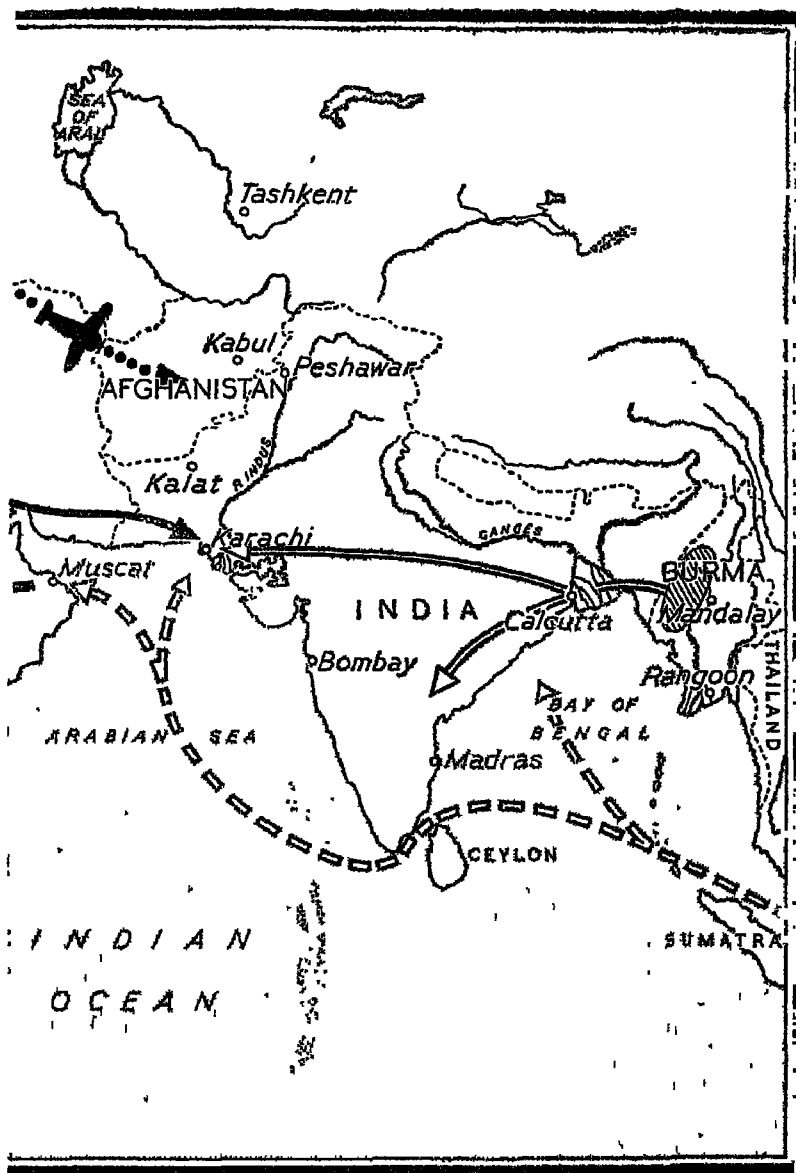
There is no doubt that the battle of Kharkov was a great success for the Germans, but neutral observers in Berlin were not ready to accept the victory without reserve. Even German officers admitted in private statements that the Russians, although sustaining heavy losses, had yet achieved one of their aims—to delay the German general offensive. In this respect the Kharkov operation was very inopportune.

The predicted summer offensive still did not come off. How its principal drives had been planned was, of course, not disclosed, but it was fairly obvious that the centre of gravity would lie on the southern front. In the course of the year the oil problem had become increasingly pressing, necessitating one restriction after another. An offensive, therefore, should aim at securing the continued conduct of the war by conquering the Caucasian oil districts.

Other urgent supply problems pointed in the same direction. The road to the oil-wells ran through the Kuban, one of Soviet Russia's richest agricultural areas. Owing to intensive industrialization in recent years there had been *no surplus of foodstuffs* in the Ukraine, which, on the contrary, had met its own needs by imports from the



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Kuban. It was thus very important that the Kuban should fall into German hands.

Military circumstances also spoke in favour of a drive to the south. After Kerch had been taken in May a heavy barrage foreboding attack was launched against Sevastopol, and in the middle of the month a comprehensive preparatory operation developed in the Kharkov sector. Further, the southern areas were cleaned up as far as possible from partisans and rear communications were rapidly built up.

Sevastopol proved a very hard nut to crack. In spite of a murderous fire from the heaviest howitzers which the German Army had at their command, incessant Stuka attacks, and the employment of new technical resources, the fortress held out week after week. The town could not be reported taken before July 1.

The delay was largely due to the activities of the Soviet Navy. Regardless of the vigilant German Air Force, the Russians succeeded, practically without break, in running convoys to the fortress under the protection of strong naval forces.

Sevastopol was a model example of what a navy can achieve in restricted waters in the face of enemy air forces. It was in itself a relatively simple task for the Luftwaffe to watch the entrance to Sevastopol. Nor did the Russian warships represent a particularly high technical standard. Yet it was admitted without reserve by the Germans that traffic could go on without interruption and with only moderate losses.

The Russians said that Sevastopol had been evacuated in about the same way as Odessa. The Germans denied this categorically, and picturesque accounts were given of the 'ships' cemetery in the harbour of Sevastopol and of the enormous columns of prisoners. On July 5 a party of foreign journalists were sent by special plane to the conquered town in order to test the German claim. Personally I thought that if, as we were told, the garrison had numbered 100,000 then the figure of prisoners, given as 97,000, seemed rather high. Some must be assumed to have escaped, and, above all—would not a considerable number have been killed? But I left it at that when Sommerfeldt, replying to a cautious question, declared that the garrison had probably numbered something like 120,000.

A few days later my colleagues returned, ill and miserable; they

had caught the unpleasant 'Crimea disease' which manifested itself in troublesome stomach-pains and general weakness. Obviously, however, the trip had complied with all reasonable journalistic demands for sensations. First of all, they declared with one voice that the 'ships' cemetery' was non-existent. One single small craft could be seen in the harbour. At least the masts of the sunken ships ought to have projected. But the water was as flat as a mill-pond. In addition, they had observed only minor transports of prisoners. Their most interesting disclosure was, however, that several younger officers had let their tongues run away with them and admitted that the Russian Navy had managed to evacuate a large portion of the garrison. Every night the Russians had carried away some thousands of men using among other things barges camouflaged as houses. Lying at the quays which the Germans did not want to destroy completely, these barges had been difficult to distinguish from the storehouses.

There was reason, then, for a substantial reduction of the official German figures of prisoners and on the whole for some mistrust of the reports about the fall of Sevastopol. This, of course, does not prove that the Russian version was entirely correct, but it obviously came closer to the truth than that of the German High Command.

It had been more or less expected that the German general offensive would be launched on June 2, since it had not begun earlier. But nothing happened, and in spite of a gigantic concentration in the East, many observers began to ask themselves if there would be any general offensive at all. Nevertheless, most people considered Hitler so tied up by his own promises that he would be bound to go into action.

On the 24th the Russians reported German attacks, described by Captain Sommerfeldt as front improvements. At the end of the month these front improvements apparently developed into the big attack and on July 1 the German High Command employed expressions which proved that the fighting had flared up on a grand scale.

### *The March on Egypt*

During the lull in the East Rommel dealt a hard blow in Africa. Strong reinforcements, with, according to opinion in Berlin, remarkably small transport losses, had been reaching him for several months past. The explanation given was that Germany and Italy,

with an intensive effort of their air forces, had succeeded in holding Malta down during the spring. Resources had not sufficed for a conquest of the island, but the British threat against the German supply lines had to a large extent been eliminated. On May 26 a German-Italian attack was launched on the British positions in Libya. Neutral circles in Berlin did not expect any more notable dislocation of the front, and the Germans themselves seemed to take the same attitude, even though they rightly placed high hopes on Rommel's ability to exploit a situation.

The fighting was followed with great excitement in Germany, but no statement was made before June 7, when the operations were thirteen days old. Then the tone was all the more victorious. We were given to understand that, after a first Axis push had been repulsed and a British counter-offensive had met with the same fate, a second stroke by Rommel had resulted in very big successes, and that this time something quite extraordinary could be expected from him.

As yet none of us journalists believed that it could involve anything more than throwing the British back to Tobruk and then another standstill. After the capture of Bir Hacheim and the isolating of a considerable British force at the coast, it was fairly clear that Rommel had won the first round. But he would have to halt at Tobruk—or so we thought.

Tobruk had become an idea, a myth. Nobody believed that this fortress, which had defied Rommel for so long, could be stormed. Well-informed Germans anticipated a lengthy siege as inevitable and were likewise inclined to believe that the increasing heat would soon bring an end to all operations.

But Rommel appeared to pay no heed to the climate nor to the conception of the fortress's being impregnable. At the storming of Bir Hacheim he led his troops in person and then drove them on incessantly, supported by large air squadrons. On June 17 his troops were christened "Panzerarmee Afrika." Big additional reinforcements, above all in aircraft, were reported as having reached him. On the 19th Tobruk was encircled and—after concentric assaults—the unbelievable occurred. On June 21 the German High Command was in the position to issue a special communiqué announcing that Tobruk had been taken by storm and the whole garrison been made prisoner.

The fall of Tobruk made an enormous impression in Berlin and throughout Germany. Public spirits rose at once to a peak not experienced since the conclusion of the battle of France in 1940. Rommel was the man of the day to whom nothing seemed impossible. Perhaps we can win the war after all, everybody said, and gave themselves up to jubilation over a victory which they felt really was a victory.

The critically minded were silenced momentarily, and the rank oppositionists were almost panic-stricken. A great gloom settled on Vienna and all Austria. The Austrians already anticipated a negotiated peace which would leave National Socialism in undiminished enjoyment of their property. The fall of Tobruk had also a catastrophic effect on Britain's earlier growing prestige in Germany. Even the most fanatical opposition men told themselves that now nothing could be expected from Britain.

The fall of Tobruk caused a moral crisis not only in Britain but, above all, among the British troops, who retreated in disorder towards Egypt pursued by a fast and reckless enemy. Egypt, one of the jewels in the crown of the British Empire, was now at stake. The tempo increased, and on June 26 it was openly said in Berlin that the Eighth Army was completely smashed, and that its remnants were in full rout eastward. At the Libyan-Egyptian border Indian troops had been overpowered, and the Marshal—Rommel's promotion had followed after Tobruk—was in Sidi Barrani.

In a lecture to the foreign Press on June 22 the German journalist Lutz Koch declared that all the time Rommel had been aiming at Tobruk. There were many indications, however, that the extent of the success had been just as great a surprise to Berlin and the German leaders as to the British. Rommel achieved results on which Hitler with all his daring flights of fancy had probably not reckoned. But now, when nothing seemed able to stem the advancing German-Italian forces and the fate of Egypt was in the balance, Berlin was not tardy in exploiting the opportunity. Did this not mean that even the much desired contact with the Japanese was in sight?

Already at the beginning of June Berlin had shown a keen interest in the political problems of Egypt. The Prime Minister, Mustapha Pasha Nahas, had been subject to furious attacks for his "treason against the real interests of his country" and for his servility to Britain. Greater hopes were placed on other Wafd politicians, and a considerable phalanx of the Arab Nationalists was considered

pro-Axis in principle. But the quisling problem was a little complicated by the fact that there were two Powers, and that Italy was intensely unpopular in Egypt, where wide circles certainly wished to get rid of the British domination, but by no means to exchange it for an Italian. Nevertheless, after the fall of Tobruk Berlin counted on another asset in the battle of Egypt—from time to time well-informed people reported that Rommel's successes had created a veritable Rommel-mania in Egypt, above all among her youth, and that the Arabs were looking forward to being liberated by the great general. I asked a good friend if he really thought the Egyptians believed that Rommel would have any authority *after* the conquest and that he would want, and be able, to prevent the Party bosses from preying like vultures on the rich country. He replied with a disconcerted smile that there were in any case influential people who believed the Egyptians "did not look upon the matter in such a way." In this connexion he hinted that the Grand Mufti and the pro-German former Prime Minister in Iraq, Rashid Ali, were going to play a certain part when Rommel had advanced farther on Alexandria.

The hermetic sealing of Egypt which the British undertook in the gravity of the situation made it more difficult for the Axis Powers to obtain reliable information from the country. Their agents there had a number of radio transmitters through which they were in touch with their employers, but now it was said that the British police had confiscated them and had quietly continued the conversations with Germany and Italy.

The speed of Rommel's advance did not seem to slow down. Obviously the Field-Marshal tried to burst through to the Nile valley in a single mighty thrust. Would the British be able to stage something like the miracle of the Marne? Berlin was all excitement. Once again a victory message arrived—the Mersa-Matruh position had been stormed, and enormous stores had fallen into the hands of the victors. Incessantly Rommel pushed on, allowing the British no peace. The heat was reported as having reached 40 degrees centigrade, and fighting should indeed have ceased for meteorological reasons. But apparently Rommel had defeated the weather too—*inter alia* with his 'refrigerated' Panzers, said military circles. And Alexandria had been chosen for the next round. Of course, there were more cautious prophets who pointed to the risks involved in

strained supply lines, but their voices were easily drowned in explanations that Rommel could live on the immense supplies he had conquered. The average German trusted his leaders that the fall of Egypt was a matter of a few days. The whole of official Berlin was agitated, all the more so as the offensive in the East had started in earnest by that time. "We are going to squeeze up the whole Near East between two pincer arms," said a well-informed source in the Wilhelmstrasse. "In a month or so the arms will meet in the Persian Gulf. After thrusting to the Caucasus and through Egypt there will be another Alexander march on India, combined with a terrific Japanese drive from Burma and the appearance of a strong Japanese Navy in the waters between India and Arabia." Another 'reliable' source revealed that airborne landings in Afghanistan would be included in this comprehensive operation.

The scheme may seem fantastic, but the problem of establishing contact with the Japanese occupied all Germans. They counted very much on Japan, who at that time seemed to be invincible. The first-mentioned of my spokesmen had something else to say about Turkey.

"Well, what do you think Turkey can do? Perhaps they can stay neutral just like your own country [Sweden], which is also surrounded by German troops in the North, in the South, in the East, and the West. But we shall see. Ankara offers no problem to us." The intended undertaking against India should not necessarily have involved an invasion of Turkey. But at the beginning of July one of my best sources with good military connexions asserted with great determination that the German leaders counted on an attack on Turkey before long. The whole idea of the thrust through the Near East depended on whether Rommel would succeed in conquering Egypt.

During these days when the fate of Egypt seemed decided and the news that Rommel had reached the outskirts of Alexandria was expected any day it became at once clear how well advised had been the caution which at least most Swedes had observed in Berlin. There had been many Germans, even in rather prominent positions, who had not concealed their opinion that Nazism was poison, and that Germany ought to make peace as her chances of winning the war were nil. In spite of this, something had kept us from abandoning the rôle of the interested listener and entering more closely into these subjects with them. Now many of the same Germans

appeared as the victors *par excellence*, telling us and others what was in store for insubordinate Sweden after Germany had broken through to the Indian Ocean and thereby created a position for herself which could not be challenged. There were many who did not hesitate to embark on details, and several of them went farther than they wanted to uphold afterwards.

The Japanese journalists were naturally extremely interested in the development. Their habitually reserved attitude had given way to a happy communicativeness, though it must be admitted that the only thing one could extract from their pronouncements was that they were very optimistic indeed and much engrossed in what would happen *after* Egypt.

The peak of excitement was reached on July 1. Rommel was reported to have reached El Alamein, and fighting was going on less than sixty-five miles from Alexandria. All commentators interpreted this as a last British attempt to resist in front of Alexandria. The Germans did not count on a result different from that at Mersa-Matruh—after the capture of which it had been made very clear that nothing was known of any prepared defence position existing between Mersa-Matruh and Alexandria.

It was further intimated in the Wilhelmstrasse that panic had broken loose, or at any rate was about to break loose, among the British in Egypt, and it was added that Tobruk would not have fallen had there not been panic. "We can also take it," it was stated, "that the impressionable Orientals are susceptible to the Rommel myth." The German Marshal, who went ahead like the desert wind, had become a legendary figure even in Egypt. An essential contribution to this result had been the appreciation of Rommel openly expressed by the British themselves. "We Germans should certainly take care not to praise an enemy general to the skies like that," smiled a German officer. It was easy to find parallels with Rommel in the history of Egypt. "The Egyptian youth is already demonstrating its spirit by cheering Rommel," said one of the officials in the Ministry of Propaganda contentedly.

One or two days passed without an announcement of the German break-through at El Alamein, but on July 3 it was explained that the fighting had developed favourably for the Germans and Italians.

Now the time was considered ripe for complementing the military offensive with a political offensive. On the 3rd Schmidt read out

with great ceremony an official declaration that the Axis Powers intended to "respect and secure the independence and sovereignty of Egypt." The proclamation was a masterpiece of Nazi phraseology. The Axis troops, it stated, did not enter Egypt as enemies but for the purpose of chasing the British from Egyptian territory and of liberating the Near East from British domination. The Axis policy was described as an application of the maxim "Egypt for the Egyptians." Finally the Egyptians were harangued as an independent and sovereign nation—after they had been freed from the British fetters.

In his comments Schmidt characterized the declaration as an historic event in that the people of Egypt had been invited to take their place within "the European family of peoples"; the Mediterranean area was defined as an integral part of Europe.

The response to the proclamation could be delivered in action, said Schmidt; but the days passed without any response, and gradually the officials became so irritated by the journalists' questions that the matter had to be dropped as one of those uncomfortable subjects which it was wise to avoid at the Press conferences.

For, meanwhile, the military development had taken a different course from that which had been expected. On the 3rd it had been reported that the fighting proceeded favourably, several important positions having been taken. On the 4th it was announced that British counter-attacks had been repulsed, and similarly on the 5th. One of the evening papers reported that the wedges in the British positions had been widened but that the enemy was putting up a stubborn resistance and that the heat had risen to 45–50 degrees centigrade. It was added that the whole El Alamein position was geographically favourable to the defender. "Nevertheless, the breakthrough has succeeded, and even these last bulwarks, designed to bar the road to Egypt with the assistance of troops rushed up from the Near and Middle East, will fall."

Those who knew German military terminology realized from this that Rommel's blitz attack had failed. What we still did not know was whether the British would be able to stand up to the new attack which surely would follow after reinforcements had been rushed from Italy. But developments during the following days showed that the British had larger supplies in the Nile valley than the Germans and Italians were able to bring up from their bases. "The British have so far the advantage of supply bases in the immediate



vicinity of the fighting zone, while Rommel has to rely on a supply line of 330 miles from Tobruk," said Captain Sommerfeldt on July 7.

It was obvious then that the miracle of the Marne had been repeated at El Alamein. Yet Egypt's fate was not definitely decided.

Mobilizing all his resources, Rommel had made a grandiose attempt to smash the British line. After its failure his troops were pinned down to a position which offered great disadvantages from a defensive point of view. The alternative was therefore continued offensive or retreat. The British regime in the Near East was saved for the time being. The sudden pincer movement had been checked. The British and other peoples—the Turks, for example, who had been very nervous—began to recover from the shock which Rommel had inflicted on his opponents.

When it gradually became clear to the more reasonable observers in Berlin that Egypt had been wrenched from the hands of Germany a quiet discussion started behind the scenes as to the reason why Rommel while winning had not won victory. The favourite argument was that the fault lay with the Italians, who were said to have committed one treachery after another. It was reported in Berlin that the fall of Tobruk had been greeted in Italy with ill-feeling. Two Germans in an Italian restaurant who had shouted "Heil!" when the radio announced the fall of Tobruk had been quickly kicked out by the angered public.

### *Attempt on Heydrich and Difficulties in the Occupied Countries*

Politically the early summer of 1942 was entirely dominated by increasing troubles in the occupied countries. Feeling grew everywhere more bitter against the Germans, problems more difficult to solve. The only country, however, where a real crisis occurred was the one which formally was not considered as occupied, namely the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

Spring had been relatively calm. But on May 27 two unknown men fired several bullets into Heydrich's car when on the way to Prague. Heydrich was badly wounded in the back and taken to hospital.

The attempt caused an enormous sensation in Berlin. It was at first assumed that it would be possible to save him, but after a few

days it was intimated that his wounds were too serious, and the outcome might be fatal.

A number of rigorous measures were imposed in the Protectorate—a state of emergency, curfew, and house inspections. A respite was given until midnight on May 30 for those who had people living with them to report them to the police—after that time both the unreported and their hosts would be executed. On June 1 the number of death sentences had already reached 111. Some of them were given on the allegation that the culprit “had approved of the attempt on Heydrich”—a motivation which later on became stereotyped.

In the beginning Berlin waited to see how Heydrich progressed and refrained from drawing any political conclusions from the incident. But when he died on June 4 the storm broke. Germany's patience was exhausted, it was declared, and it would not be surprising if Hitler sent the whole Czech people to the Ukraine. There was hardly any doubt that this was what they would have liked to do. At the funeral service in the Reichskanzlei on the 9th Hácha was among those present. It was reported that Hitler had shortly before cast the Ukraine in Hácha's teeth in a frightful fit of anger.

But the Ukraine was an impracticable solution for technical reasons. The Protectorate was the Reich's most important arms foundry, the production of which could not be interrupted for a moment. Hitler, therefore, gave the Czechs “one more chance,” said the Ministry of Propaganda. The guilt was imputed to the British and the émigrés.

That the measures against the Czechs were not carried further still depended perhaps to some degree on the fact that the Czechs, judging from all evidence, had not had any hand whatsoever in the assassination. This must have been made clear to Hitler by the scrupulous investigation of the case.

Peculiar rumours began to circulate a few days after the attempt. Now the military, now the police themselves were said to have organized the murder. By and by it was fairly generally accepted that the opposition in the police had removed him. Heydrich seems still more than Himmler to have been the typical representative of the berserk tendencies within the police and the S.S. and was considered even by his colleagues as a regular bloodhound. It can now be stated for a certainty that Heydrich was murdered by his own

people, although not by the opposition as such. The organizers of the assassination appear to have been three high police officers who, after having filled their own coffers in the Generalgouvernement, on their return home were forced to give up the better part of their looted property to Heydrich, who exploited his information for black-mailing. When it was revealed that they had revenged themselves by murdering the deputy Reichsprotektor two of them were executed, while the third committed suicide.

The official version of what had happened was that the culprits had been found in a church on June 18 and had been shot there. They were described as two former N.C.O.'s in the Czechoslovak Army who, after training in England, had been dropped by parachute from a long-range bomber with the explicit task of murdering Heydrich. They had been protected and helped by several Czech families and had made contact with other parachutists.

The Czech Press had at an early stage given the lead to the public debate by placing the responsibility for what had happened on the émigrés. The papers outlined a 'rescue scheme' for the Czechs, the essence of which was to be "loyal behaviour towards the German Reich, ruthless elimination of elements hostile to the State, and increased effort particularly in war industries." The originator of this scheme was the Minister of Propaganda, the former Colonel Emanuel Moravech. How far this man went appears from his own words in *Die Aktion* soon after Heydrich's death: "The Government of the Protectorate and with them myself are facing a task of educating the Czechs into good National Socialists."

Gradually the number of executions diminished. Among the victims were several generals and other high-ranking officers of the former Czechoslovak Army, professors, headmasters, teachers, and officials of different kinds, among others mayors. The total number of executions officially reported during the weeks following the assassination amounted to about 1600, including the men shot in the two villages of Lidice and Lecáký, the whole populations of which were accused of having been directly or indirectly involved in it.

Unrest was also growing noticeably in the occupied countries. This was the case in Holland, for example, where early in May seventy-two members of a secret national organization, mainly

officers and non-commissioned officers of the Dutch forces, were executed. The German paper in Holland warned the Dutch people in harsh terms, and the German-controlled Dutch papers repeated the warning. Courts martial must now stress the seriousness of Germany's words, it was said. "Every one must know that he is playing with his head at stake. Nor does the fact that the condemned have been acting for patriotic motives make any difference. Germany cannot pay any regard to this without endangering her own existence." A few days later the military commandant decreed that all former regimental officers of the Dutch Army should report to the German authorities. On May 14 it was announced in The Hague that another twenty-four persons had been executed. At the same time 460 were taken as hostages against further sabotage.

The fight between the occupation authorities and the Dutch quislings on the one hand and the overwhelming majority of the people on the other became more and more bitter. In particular people demonstrated in favour of the Jews. Dutch youths flaunted the David Star, others walked arm-in-arm with Jews or took off their hats to the Stars. Extremely annoyed at these pinpricks, the representatives of the occupying Power announced that Dutchmen who did not cease being friendly towards the Jews and "challenging the occupying Power by provocative behaviour" might be treated as Jews.

The Dutch population gave the quislings their share of insults. Mussert's followers could not defend themselves and complained to the German authorities. In June, Schmidt, the leader of the National Socialist party of the country, decreed that the New Order and its adherents must not be insulted, and that severe measures would be taken against those who committed such offences.

In May and June unrest also increased in Belgium. Attempts on persons and sabotage were carried out, followed by executions and deportations. For several months a number of lawsuits had been pursued against the decrees of the departmental secretaries-general who, after the Belgian Government had left the country, had taken over the leadership of the Ministries on the strength of an emergency law. There were several gaps in the law which the Belgian opposition exploited for questioning the legality of the decrees issued by the secretaries-general at the request of the Germans. The Belgian judicature seized with delight on this opportunity of demonstrating

against the occupying Power, and it looked for a moment as if the whole rationing system would go to pieces. The military commandant was then compelled to intervene with a decree on May 14 wherein the decisions of the secretaries-general were given absolute validity regardless of the results at which the courts might arrive, and wherein the resources of the occupying Power were cited as a guarantee for the execution of the decisions.

A very grave jurisdictional crisis arose out of this decree. A number of judges resigned, and big demonstrations took place. Nevertheless, the situation did not become as serious as in Holland.

In the Baltic States extraordinary measures had been taken throughout the spring, although hardly any of them became publicly known. But many foreign journalists in Berlin were fairly well informed of what was going on. The foremost stumbling-block was the excessively hard levies imposed by the Germans on the Estonians, Latvian, and Lithuanian farmers. The farmers, not taking the risk of starving, retained as much as possible by burying it or otherwise hiding it, and an extensive clandestine trade developed. On July 15 a decree was issued in Lithuania according to which recalcitrant farmers would be punished with confiscation of all their cattle and, alternatively, loss of their farms and deportation to labour camps. But the situation did not improve.

## VI

### THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN 1942

#### *Military and Political Offensive against Russia*

AT THE END OF JUNE FIGHTING STARTED IN THE KHARKOV SECTOR and within a few days attained such dimensions as to herald the big offensive. On a 200-mile front German and Axis troops attacked. The usual reticence was observed in the beginning, but on July 4 a tremendous break-through in the direction of the Don was reported. On June 5 it was announced that the attacking troops had reached the river on a broad front after a break-through between Kharkov and Kursk. The advance proceeded rapidly, and on the following day bridgeheads were already reported established on the other side of the Don. On July 7 the German High Command disclosed that Voronezh had been taken. Later on it turned out that only part of the town had been occupied, while the Russians were still holding the remainder.

On July 11 the first phase of the offensive was reported concluded. The big German territorial gains were explained as being the result of new tactics and of an enormous concentration of various offensive weapons. The new tactics appeared to involve a highly developed camouflage of the points of attack by means of continuous regrouping of the units and an increased motorization which enabled supplies to keep pace with the advance. To this were added non-stop air attacks clearing the way for the German troops, keeping the air practically free from Soviet planes, and causing havoc among the retreating Russians by bombing the key-points of communications. Moreover, the Germans had a numerical superiority on the southern front. In all there were probably about 225 German divisions in the East plus twenty-two Rumanian, nine Italian, eight Hungarian, three Slovakian, and one Croat division, or about 270 all told. The Russians certainly had 300 divisions or more, but they were not concentrated in the South to the same extent as the Germans.

Marshal Timoshenko yielded rapidly, refraining from engaging himself in bigger battles. This contributed to the speed of the German advance. The elastic defence employed by the Russians

made it impossible for the Germans to take larger numbers of prisoners. The issue was whether the retreating Russian units would be able to keep intact.

To begin with, the Nazi leaders were, in spite of successes, very cautious in their statements. On July 9 *Das Schwarze Korps* warned against underestimating the Russians, who had the advantage, said the paper, of "the infinity of space." Then it went on:

Even the most comprehensive movement here becomes necessarily a partial action. The enemy is still in the possession of a base area, and he still has man-power reserves. Only by stubborn efforts can he be broken down and his material destroyed, his production centres seized, his sources of raw materials cut off, and the arteries of his economic life strangled.

The proportions which the fighting reached made the question of Allied assistance to the Soviet Union particularly important. It was, therefore, with immense triumph that the German High Command could announce on July 7 that submarines and planes had succeeded in sinking the better part of a gigantic Allied convoy on its way to Murmansk with war materials for several armies. The protecting British force had included battleships, said Berlin.

After his retreat had been going on for some days Timoshenko found it difficult to retain order within the units. The German Air Force was incessantly over them, trying to upset communications, and German tank columns drove wedges into the yielding Russian lines.

At the end of July the German forces were divided up, and while strong detachments advanced straight eastward, others were thrown southward. The whole Russian front was tottering, Rostov was taken, and the German Army crossed the Don on a broad front. The tone of the Russian communiqués became grave, and the Russian radio revealed increasing anxiety. The British Minister of Production, Captain Oliver Lyttelton, described the coming eighty days as crucial. Strong demands for a second front were raised in Russia.

The tempo was further accelerated, and the German troops fanned out over the North Caucasian plain at lightning speed. Voroshilovgrad was reached on August 4, and three days later the German High Command declared that German troops had got as far as the slopes

of the Caucasus on a front of more than 265 miles. Sommerfeldt's deputy stated openly that the thrust aimed straight at Baku.

In the Don bend, too, the Germans made surprisingly swift progress. Stalingrad was not expected to be a very difficult undertaking; at the end of July a well-known Press officer took the view that the city would be in German hands by August 3.

Berlin watched the developments in breathless agitation. Public feeling improved again, and responsible circles indulged in happy expectations. Perhaps, in spite of all, it would be possible to beat the Red Army? Excitement spread to the public, although people as a rule did not know how fast the whole affair had developed, and how critical the situation was, in fact, for the Russians.

Nevertheless there was no reason to believe that Russia was faced with immediate collapse. Great astonishment was therefore caused among international Press circles in Berlin when in August another Dietrich show was suddenly staged. As starting-point served a declaration on August 7 by a military spokesman in Tokyo to the effect that the Soviet Union would be compelled to conclude a separate peace with Germany since the British and Americans were not able to give the Russians effective assistance.

The statement roused great interest among the journalists. Had not the idea of a German separate peace with Russia from time to time been brought into discussion, and had not Japan in this connexion been mentioned as a mediator? What would Dietrich say to this Tokyo message, he who had taken such pains to convince Stalin over the radio that his allies only wanted to fox and deceive him, and, above all, that their assistance was of no value to Russia? When we saw Dr Schmidt the little man twisted his thumbs and declared that the Japanese statement, of which he had been advised, could with the expression 'separate peace' only refer to an unconditional capitulation by the Russians. "This, gentlemen, is the German standpoint. The word victory must come before the word peace."

A lively discussion followed upon the Press conference. What was brewing? Nobody knew anything definite. On the following day we were all the more dumbfounded when an unusual guest, Colonel von Wedel, Chief of the Press Department of the German High Command, appeared at the Press conference and reported that the German troops had "somewhere during the offensive on the Caucasus" come across a Soviet 'order of the day' dated July 28



of—to put it mildly—sensational contents. Colonel von Wedel gave his word for its authenticity.

This 'order of the day' began by stating that some of the Russian troops on the southern front had, owing to propaganda by panic-mongers, abandoned Rostov and Novocherkask "without offering serious resistance and without order from Moscow and thus disgraced their banners." Then it went on:

The people of our country who hitherto have spoken with devotion and veneration of the Red Army are disappointed and losing faith in it. Many are cursing the Red Army because it delivers the population to the yoke of the German oppressors whilst itself retreating eastward.

Then followed a lengthy explanation of the reasons why the Red Army must not retreat farther but had to follow the motto: "Not a step backward!" The only remarkable point in this explanation was the statement that Russia was no longer superior to Germany with regard to man-power reserves and supplies of grain.

The Germans are not so strong as the panic-mongers want you to believe, it continued. The Germans are straining their resources. To resist their pressure now and during the next few months means to secure the Russian victory. But we lack order and discipline in the units. We can no longer tolerate commissars and commanders who leave their units at will. The querulous and the cowards must be destroyed on the spot. Commanders and commissars abandoning their positions without explicit order should be considered as traitors and treated accordingly.

The High Command of the Red Army therefore orders that all commanders who allow troops to abandon their positions arbitrarily shall be brought before a court martial, and that special penal battalions of eight hundred men and penal companies of a hundred and fifty to two hundred men shall be set up and assigned to particularly dangerous points of the front.

The order was signed by Stalin.

This 'order of the day' was very cleverly put together, but in parts also naïve. If it were authentic, then it need not be said that the Germans would have every reason to consider it a windfall. After a scrupulous study of it, however, most of us were inclined to

assume that it was a so-called 'planted' order, intended to give the Germans the wrong impression. But, of course, there were two other possibilities—either that it was authentic or that it had been manufactured by the Germans.

The question of its authenticity may here be left aside. The essential thing was that the publication of the order coincided with the rumours of a separate peace. August 8 was not over before we were given another surprise. In the evening a colleague telephoned me asking if the *Dienst aus Deutschland* had appeared with a second evening edition. "No," I replied. "But," he said, "they 'phoned me and told me a fantastic story about Stalin's having been removed, and so forth."

I telephoned to one or two of my other colleagues—some had been told, others not.

The sensational news which the *Dienst aus Deutschland* gave some of its subscribers that evening was the following:

The Soviet Union is facing a military and political collapse. Time is running out for the Red rulers. According to information received in Berlin, the British and Americans are engaged in an attempt to replace the bankrupt Stalin regime by a new regime. The British and Americans want to replace the Bolshevik regime by a military government which could later on be transformed into a constitutional monarchy. A candidate to the throne exists—the twenty-eight-years-old Grand Duke Vsevolod, who is the son of the Grand Duke Ivan Konstantinovitch and the Serbian Princess Helena, and married to an Englishwoman. The new regime will continue the war, and every thought of a separate peace is said to be excluded. The regime intends to win a certain popularity by committing itself to organizing elections for a National Assembly after the war.

It was with some hesitation that those journalists who had received the information passed it on. We knew that from time to time the Germans used the unofficial *Dienst aus Deutschland* for launching rumours for which they did not wish to be responsible. Here seemed to be a typical case. How had the 'weak' Americans and 'completely powerless' British suddenly become strong enough to overthrow Stalin? To me the timing of the report seemed to be significant—if any peace move was in the making, then, of course, the report was a link in that business. Anyway, I was glad to see that

my foreign editor had published my cable under the heading: "Rumours in Berlin."

Nobody has, as far as I know, given a satisfactory explanation of what really was behind all this. On the following day questions were categorically dismissed, and after a few days discussions ceased for lack of material. The only remotely probable explanation I have heard was given me by a man with good Japanese contacts. He said that the Japanese had, in fact, been engaged on a mediation, and that the Germans had wanted to make the Russians agreeable by showing them the malevolent designs of the Allies against Stalin. That the incident should be understood as part of a political offensive against Russia seems fairly clear.

In the middle of August the tempo slowed down considerably in the Caucasus. Rain began to fall in torrents, and the German and Italian Alpine troops did not make any noteworthy advances. Along the coast the Soviet Black Sea fleet represented a continuous flank threat. In front of the Grozny plains the Russians offered fierce resistance and called up reinforcements both from Persia and the Turco-Russian border, which was practically depleted of troops. The Germans did not fail to point out to the Turks this favourable opportunity to 'settle' with their arch-enemy, and Berlin began to talk about the oppressed 'Turkish minorities in the Caucasus. But the Turks did not rise to the bait, and the Russians obviously relied on their Allies' power to control Turkey. Only very small forces, among others women battalions, were left at the frontier in the South.

On the other hand, the Germans made good progress in the Stalingrad area. In a special communiqué on August 12 the German High Command reported that the Soviet forces round Kalach had been annihilated. At the end of the month a German Panzer corps succeeded in crossing the Don north-west of Stalingrad and cut off the city from the Russian main forces in the North. On September 1 these German troops were reported to have reached the Volga. On the 4th Russian resistance was said to have collapsed and the fate of the whole position to be sealed. At some points the Germans were already in the outskirts of the city.

The Russians were forced back only inch by inch. Their furious counter-attacks were repulsed but could not be brought to a standstill. On September 11 the Germans reported that they had reached

the Volga south of Stalingrad, too. But the fury of the fighting did not diminish, and day followed upon day with only slow progress. Then we heard of street-fighting in which the Russians literally had to be smoked out. As an example of their toughness a military expert said privately that the tank factories of the city were still at work, and that every day twenty new tanks appeared in the battle.

On the 13th we were informed that the real storming had begun; but the days went by, and the German newspapers had increasing difficulty in finding appropriate words to record the steadily accelerating crescendo of the battle. The whole area is one single fortress, it was said. Again, an officer just returned from Stalingrad reported that no stronger fortifications existed. Gradually the Press began to speak apologetically about the facts that the German regiments were no longer up to full strength and that the men had not slept for days and weeks. The strategic aim was certainly already achieved, it was explained at the end of September. The foreigners in the German capital interpreted this statement as a preparation for a propagandist retreat.

The strategy for the campaign was considered to have been the result of Hitler's, Halder's, and Jodl's united efforts. It aimed at creating—through a thrust to Stalingrad—a favourable strategic position for the conquest of the Caucasus. But the drive on Stalingrad and the drive in the South were carried on simultaneously, and this proved fatal. The long span of the offensive and the maximum effort involved exhausted the German soldiers. This is probably the principal reason for the failure to reach the targets, in spite of big successes. But I was also told that one of the reasons for the lull in the Caucasus which later occurred was shortage of motor fuel. The oil transports had to be directed to Stalingrad.

### *The German Soldier faces the Winter*

Stalingrad had been reached after an enormous employment of aircraft and tanks. The city was not yet taken, but its capture was generally considered in Berlin as a question of time. German prestige was so strongly engaged in the issue that Hitler was likely to throw in everything to achieve it.

But even assuming that this were possible within a reasonable time, the whole affair had proved much more difficult than had

originally been calculated. The tough Russian resistance in the Don bend had delayed the action against Stalingrad for two full months. Doubts as to whether the conquest of Stalingrad would be worth the price began to be heard. It would certainly imply cutting off the Russian Volga traffic. But meanwhile there was cause for anxiety over the slow progress in the Caucasus. The Maikop oil-wells had fallen into German hands early in September, but their production was not more than 2.3 million tons a year, and in addition the Russians had fairly thoroughly destroyed the installations before they left. A German expert commission of forty men arrived in Maikop immediately after its capture. One or two days later a military patrol, thinking that the big building where they had been quartered looked rather deserted, entered. They found the guard dead and upstairs they discovered that the whole commission had been killed by partisans.

It would, of course, have been a good help had the Germans during the first year been able to extract, say, one million tons of oil from the Maikop field. But the German forces needed quantities on a very much larger scale. Again, Grozny would be of decisive assistance; but it was not taken yet and would not, as it turned out later, be taken.

And now it was getting late. Winter war would soon be a fact. At home this prospect was treated with the greatest optimism and confidence. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote, for instance, on September 21 that the German soldier was prepared for the new winter, "as well prepared as will ever be possible." There were many indications, however, that the soldiers at the front did not share this optimism. Even though the preparations this time were on a scale quite different from that in 1941-42, they did not like the thought of what was coming to them. The cold made itself felt in the evenings already at the beginning of September and, shortly after, the autumn rains and autumn storms set in. Soon it became clear that the available reserves to relieve the exhausted front-line units were limited.

Nor did the front-line soldiers agree with the popular conception at home of the Russian opponent. Many admitted that the Russians were definitely superior in winter warfare. Also all experts showed a marked respect for the Russians. Something of this leaked out to the public. In August a notable military writer stated in a military

publication that the Bolshevik soldier's greatest advantage over the Germans was "his highly developed animal instincts and his immunity to weather and terrain." He who wanted to beat the Russians had to be familiar with marshes and forests, he must be able to find his way in fog and darkness just as well as in daylight—the Russians attacked almost only in fog and darkness and had repeatedly succeeded in taking the Germans by surprise. And he must, like a hunter, be master of the terrain.

The Russians are, moreover, champions of improvisation. They hurl out artillery shells from glider planes, they make immediate use of captured arms and they rapidly organize scratch units from farm workers who are left to find their own weapons. The Russians are also ceaselessly active. Hardly a day passes without the attempt at a push. The German soldier easily becomes slovenly if the fighting has lasted long. He has to be prepared against the Russians fighting cunningly. Destruction lurks in a thousand different ways, from the tricks of the Russian civilian population and the prisoners of war, especially the younger ones who are capable of any infamy, to mines, camouflage, and ambushes. Reconnaissance is the be-all and the end-all in Russia.

The German expert went on to stress the importance of supplies getting through to the front even if wheel-axles break down and horses collapse. He underlined the importance of the soldiers' personal hygiene:

He who does not keep clean degenerates completely in Russia. There is no excuse for not washing every day; there is always plenty of time and water. Slackness must be defeated. War in extremes of cold or heat, in knee-deep mud and thick slush, demands a soldier who is every inch a man. Only those who in the face of death do not lose their nerve are suitable fighters against Bolshevism. Weaklings must know that the leaders punish cowardice with death. In the battle between the two world ideologies, in the assault of the Red masses, it becomes clear to every one that the life of the individual is of no significance whatever.

The Russian material resources were also highly rated, at least by some German experts. Even when it came to the Air Force, the military Achilles' heel of the Soviet, production was estimated as considerable. They were said to be turning out fifteen hundred planes monthly from altogether seventy factories.

The wearing down of the German military man-power had obviously developed much further in 1942 than in 1941. More and more accounts of desertions began to reach the home front. Soldiers on leave repeatedly declared that the general feeling at the front was extremely bad—even worse than during the previous winter. From time to time German families received the terrible message: "We have unfortunately been compelled to shoot your son because of his cowardice in the face of the enemy." A young officer told me that a not inconsiderable number of German deserters had reported to the Russians for active service against Germany. 'Indirect desertion' was also reaching dangerous proportions. A new professional expression had evolved—*die Verkrümelung* (crumbling off). This meant that German soldiers 'by mistake' lost contact with their units. My source assured me—and other eyewitnesses confirmed what he said—that thousands of German soldiers were at large behind the front engaged in 'trying to find' their units. The German military authorities, he said, were rather at a loss in face of this business as they hesitated before the most drastic solution—to hustle them into the nearest unit handy.

Animosity ruled at the front against the rear and the bureaucracy at home. A doctor reported that even the men in the *Waffen-S.S.* began to curse at "*die Bonzokratie*" (the Party bosses), and promised to plug them with an *Erinnerungskugel*—a bullet for remembrance—on return home.

Another report for which I am prepared to vouch is that religious feeling was strongly increasing at the front, particularly among officers. Anthroposophy drew a special following. An essay by Rudolf Steiner written shortly before his death in which Germany's future destiny was forecast with uncanny probability was secretly circulated. Steiner had written that the turning-point for Hitler would occur during the autumn of 1942. His regime would be succeeded by a short Hohenzollern era. An alarming sign of beginning dissolution was that stimulants came more and more into use—according to the soldiers at the front—above all methadrene, which had long been given to German units before particularly dangerous undertakings. Regular use of methadrene had bad effects.

One factor, however, which was working increasingly in a favourable direction was fear of the consequences of a German military

collapse in the East. Not only the officers but also the men literally felt the knife at their throats. Every one knew that his personal chances of getting back home except with a regular unit were practically nil.

*Operations against Britain on Land, at Sea, and in the Air*

The war in the East absorbed Germany's resources to such an extent during the summer that only a fraction of them could be thrown in against the British. Although some spasmodic attempts were made to maintain the idea that the Germans could invade Britain, the actual problem was the reverse. The Germans were, however, at this time not afraid of British attacks. The opponent was considered too weak for a large-scale attempt, and the fortifications in the West and the garrisons there were regarded as capable of coping easily with small expeditions.

German propaganda tried by every possible means to prove that a British invasion was impossible. Apart from the strength of the Atlantic wall, it referred to the British shortage of tonnage. It boasted even that the Germans would be happy to see the English arrive "so that at last we may get to grips with them on equal conditions." This was not only propaganda; there were German officers who seriously entertained this view. "We hope," they said, "that the British yield to Stalin's pressure and start something before they are properly prepared. If they do something now the outcome is bound to be a regular defeat for them, and nothing better could happen from our point of view. They would then perhaps not even be able to come back better prepared in the following year. Defeatist ideas easily infiltrate after such failures, and what we want to achieve is above all that the British begin to think it hopeless to strike at us, and that a compromise is necessary. Here is our chance."

Had the German leaders been of this opinion then their propaganda should have said something different. It was probably only a more private attitude among, in my view, clear-sighted younger officers. However that may be, the British proved to have sufficient stamina to resist the exhortations from Moscow and choose their own time and their own objectives for their operations.

On August 19 they undertook a commando raid on Dieppe. Major Sommerfeldt—he was promoted now—warned us against



considering it as an attempt to create a second front. But on the following day he had received new instructions and declared, noticeably embarrassed, that it had, in fact, been such an attempt, an invasion which, however, from a military point of view had been folly. As might be expected, the tone on the opposite side of the Wilhelmstrasse was even more marked. Schmidt declared that the operation had turned out to be nothing less than "a terrific catastrophe, another Dunkirk." The action had been undertaken on Stalin's order—he was then suddenly once again the dominating figure of the coalition of Germany's enemies and had 'ordered' the British Prime Minister on his visit to Moscow to open the second front immediately. That American soldiers had thereby been buried in European soil was President Roosevelt's fault "and will bring about a stirring awakening of the American people. The American soldiers who yesterday fell at Dieppe are being received by the Germans and their friends with good conscience as a contribution to the new Europe." To be fair I must state that it was not even Schmidt's habit to express himself about the enemy quite so crudely. Even the officials who were well drilled to display approval of whatever was said by the conference leader looked embarrassed.

Peculiarly enough, a few days later the Germans themselves smashed their own theory of Dieppe as an attempt to create a second front. On September 1 the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reprinted some pages from a "captured" British order of attack. This contained five phases of the operation. The last ones were destruction by the pioneers, withdrawal, re-embarkation, and debarkation in Britain and "dispersal of troops."

When somebody drew the attention of the Minister of Propaganda to the improbability that an operation which obviously had included rapid re-embarkation had been designed as the opening of a second front the whole place was set by the ears. But it was too late by then.

But even with regard to its limited scope the Dieppe raid was a success for the Germans. It had shown among other things that mobile forces could appear very swiftly on the field and also that the coastal defence was of considerable strength.

The German attempt a little later to defeat the British on the only existing land front, in North Africa, failed. In the night of August 30-31 Rommel struck for all he was worth, but met an enemy

different from the one who had been beaten in the spring. He was compelled to abandon his offensive after heavy losses. The Germans and Italians tried to belittle what had happened, maintaining that Rommel had only made a reconnaissance in force.

The submarine war was carried on with undiminished ferocity, and the Germans placed great hopes on it. Their own figures for sinkings of Allied ships during June, July, and August surpassed 800,000 tons per month. For September the German High Command reported the record figure of 1,012,000 tons. Admiral Doenitz, in an interview granted to the German P.K. man, Gerhart Weise, said that the contest between the north-south route and the east-west route in the Mediterranean—in other words between the German and the Allied lines of communication—had been decided in favour of the former, and that the Air Force was an opponent which, although it could destroy odd submarines, never could eliminate them all—"just as a crow can never defeat a mole, since the Lord has given them different spheres of existence." The anti-aircraft guns of the submarines were more dangerous to the planes than their bombs were to the submarines, said the German expert.

It was extremely difficult for foreign observers in Berlin to judge the real effect of the submarine attacks. Our general attitude was a fair degree of scepticism in face of the high-gear German expectations—with every right, as it turned out later.

The war in the air went on like the submarine war, practically without interruption. Its intensity was from time to time hampered by the weather. But, on the whole, sustained British blows against Western Germany were to be expected to which the Germans would not be able to retaliate.

In the beginning the British air attacks were belittled. The heavy raid on Cologne on the night of May 31–June 1 was thus alleged to have been carried out by not more than seventy planes instead of a thousand, as the British maintained. A few days later, however, well-informed Germans admitted that the number of attacking planes had been between three and four hundred. Gradually German propaganda took another line. The significance of the British attacks was no longer underestimated—it was impossible to maintain that attitude in face of the sorely battered population of

Western Germany—but it was pointed out that military damage was extremely small, and that the attacks were directed against the morale of the German people.

These attacks must be defeated, all official speakers emphasized. Even London's endurance was cautiously referred to as proof that this was possible. Vengeance would be taken later on, but was impossible for the moment as the concentration in the East necessitated passivity in the West. In order to make this clear to the population, Dr Goebbels himself went to Western Germany, where he, to quote the German Press, made himself the spokesman of "a higher strategy" involving the concentration of all resources in the East. The population was officially described as having shown full understanding of the situation. In private, however, one could hear other versions of the people's behaviour during Goebbels' visit. The regime was, in fact, in a dilemma, since Goebbels was the only one who knew how to present a theory to the people in a reasonable way, but at the same time was perhaps the most unpopular man in Germany.

### *Shifting Opinions*

Public feeling in Germany was rather low already during the summer, in spite of the initial successes in the East. This was to some extent due to the air attacks, but no doubt mainly a natural reaction after the high expectations entertained during Rommel's victories. The progressing influence of the war in everyday life and the approaching prospect of another winter campaign accelerated the general deterioration of morale. A decision in the East seemed to be as distant as ever.

*Das Schwarze Korps* said in August:

On the day when Marshal Pétain capitulated all of us, with few exceptions, thought ourselves nearer to final victory than ever. Only one opponent seemed to remain—Britain. And even those pessimists who considered it necessary to conquer the island itself expected the war to be finished within one or two months. Things turned out differently. That the invasion did not come off strengthened British morale and became a psychological burden to the Germans. In the background was Russia, and only the Führer and a few of his immediate circle knew what lay behind the frontier. To-day we have settled down thoroughly to the war.

We have taken to it well and hung up peace in the wardrobe, properly peppered with moth powder.

In the last statements *Das Schwarze Korps* had surely indulged in wishful thinking.

An interesting symptom of the mood of the people was the growth of rumours. At this time they dealt, in particular, with no less than the chief of the German police. Some said he was dead, others that he had been slightly wounded on a flight between Norway and Hamburg, others that the High Command had enforced his withdrawal after he had in Hitler's presence drawn his revolver and shot a general. That something had happened to Himmler in September seems probable. A fact is that the bookshops in Berlin suddenly received a confidential note from the Ministry of Propaganda ordering the suppression of all pictures of Himmler. However, he obviously recovered his position before long. Later in the autumn he was carrying on as usual.

To counteract the downward curve of public feeling propaganda and police control were intensified. The dominant theme of propaganda was the difference between 1917 and 1942. In 1917, it was explained, the German nation suffered from internal weakness and anæmia at the top. Defeatism and paralysing fatalism spread, and the German people lacked the will to victory. In 1942 it was different. "We have accepted the war," was the standing phrase.

An important point of view was the outcome of the last world war. "Never more a 1918" was indeed the best slogan the National Socialists could wish for. Its effect was further strengthened by pointing out that 1918 was child's play compared with what was now in store for all Germans—without exception—if Germany were defeated.

The tightening up of the police control was carried out in the usual way: arrests, executions, espionage, and so forth. German administration of law was remodelled by the appointment of Dr Thierack as Minister of Justice of the Reich and the Party fanatic Rothenberger as his right-hand man. They were to be responsible for the comprehensive and total National Socialist revolution being carried through even in this sphere.

It had been generally expected that Governor-General Frank would be entrusted with this task. But, however devoted a Nazi, he

had opposed the despotic police regime and had dared to point out in public lectures that legal security was consistent with the totalitarian system, and that the National Socialist State must not degenerate into a pure police regime. The deafening applause which had greeted these statements of Frank's must have been a source of annoyance to Himmler, and, in short, Frank was not made Minister of Justice.

The active personality in the constellation Thierack-Rothenberger was the latter. Proof of this was given to the whole foreign Press in Berlin only one or two days later. For Dr Rothenberger (in Nazi uniform) gave a lecture to the journalists in which he said almost directly that it was he who was the originator of the whole reshuffle, the changes having been initiated on the basis of a memorandum from himself to Hitler, that he (Rothenberger) had drafted the powers of the Reichsminister of Justice, etc. Now, many things in the Third Reich had to be interpreted cautiously and Rothenberger's self-confident phrases were certainly toned down a little in the correspondents' dispatches on the matter. A colleague of mine, however, stated frankly that it had been made clear that Rothenberger and not Thierack was the leading man. This dispatch caused—apart from rebukes to the correspondent—a terrific row between the Minister of Justice and his secretary-general, in which the former gave the latter some bitter pills.

A few weeks later the foreign Press as a body was made to feel that the atmosphere had become more severe. On September 7 Brauweiler, of the Ministry of Propaganda, summoned a special conference with all the foreign journalists in Berlin. There had already been rumours of drastic restrictions, and we went there with evil forebodings.

These forebodings proved well founded. Dr Brauweiler announced that the Reich Press Chief had issued new directions for the foreign journalists in Berlin, since, in the opinion of the Government of the Reich, dispatches to other countries during the last months had been damaging to the German conduct of war. In two cases it had been necessary to resort to expulsion of the culprits.

The Reich Press Chief intended, said Brauweiler, to spare journalists the deterioration of their working conditions which a censorship would involve. But if 'freedom' of reporting was to be retained then it would be necessary to 'supplement' the existing regulations.

The supplementing regulations appeared to involve a complete change in the character of our work. Practically all dispatches were in future to be written "in accordance with an authoritative source," and only strictly official material was considered to fall within this category. In cases which did not comply with this condition a written translation in two copies was to be referred to a special control room which was to be set up in the Ministry of Propaganda.

Newspapers and periodicals in the Reich area (thus including the Generalgouvernement and the Protectorate) would still be allowed to be quoted, although not considered an authoritative source.

The most interesting regulation was perhaps that all articles on foreign policy were to use, as guidance and keynote, the statements at the Foreign Office Press conferences. This was an obvious attempt by Schmidt to compel us to repeat his comments. When the passage was read out he leaned back in his chair with a triumphant smile. Hitherto he had had the daily experience of producing long propaganda lectures without a single line of it being printed in our pages.

Brauweiler finally stressed that deviations from the new 'directions' would automatically be punished by expulsion, and that if the paragraphs about treason against the country were infringed the law would strike at the delinquents with full rigour. It is a peculiarity of the Third Reich that, according to her laws, a foreigner can commit treason against Germany. And of this we should be guilty even by informing our editors-in-chief of the contents of the new instructions. Any mention of them was prohibited—the editors of the papers abroad and, even more so, their readers should live in ignorance of the cause of the sudden change in the dispatches from Berlin. This was defended as a means of "avoiding the imposition of a censorship." There was, of course, not one journalist who did not in one way or another inform his chief, although there were examples of well-meaning Press attachés who, referring to the risk, advised against it and refused to forward such a dangerous message! All the neutral correspondents were put out by the new instructions, and several of us, including myself, considered applying for a summons home. We all believed that nothing approaching a decent job would be possible in future. But our papers wanted us to remain, at least for the time being. The *Scandinavian Referent*

of the Foreign Office, Brunhoff, also advised us to wait and see and hinted that it would perhaps not be too bad in practice. He was right. After a few weeks we began to understand that the new instructions would chiefly remain on paper. There was nobody in the Ministry of Propaganda who yet knew where the new control room was situated, and when a stubborn colleague had got it into his head that he would have a look at the new censors they turned out to be the old familiar postal censors who had had their duties somewhat extended.

One of the more embarrassing consequences of the new regulations was that we were not allowed to mention reports by foreign radio stations nor to use the German papers in the occupied countries. Simultaneously the German Press received a strong admonition not to publish material which might be exploited by us for "malevolent speculations." Undoubtedly our reports, after September '15 when the new decree came into force, were of much lower quality than before.

The new instructions for the journalists coincided with rigorous measures against other foreigners. The Foreign Office suddenly informed the diplomatic corps that it was preferable if diplomats did not travel farther than fifty kilometres from Berlin without a special authority from the German Foreign Office. Foreign businessmen too felt the increasing chill in the air.

Hitler's speech for the Winter Help on September 30 had this time been awaited with greater excitement than usual. It was, moreover, uncertain until the last moment whether he would speak or not.

The familiar arrangements had been made. The leaders streamed in, applauded by the selected Party assembly. Suddenly a hurricane of jubilation broke—Goebbels had arrived. We stretched our necks wondering what on earth had happened—had Goebbels become *popular* overnight? But the riddle was solved in a moment: the cunning Joseph had brought with him Field-Marshal Rommel. After his unsuccessful attack at El Alamein, about which the German public were ignorant, Rommel had spent some time in Germany for reasons of health. Goebbels and Rommel strode towards their seats of honour, greeted by a storm of cheers which left no doubt for whom they were intended. Everybody shouted, "Rommel! Rommel!"

After a speech by Goebbels, the only point of which was a categorical denial of reports that leading National Socialists were ill, dead, etc., the *Badenweiler March* was struck up. Hitler entered, surrounded by his staff and—*noted with special interest in view of the rumours mentioned above*—Chief of the S.S. Himmler. On the platform a striking scene occurred when Hitler first greeted Rommel. Then everybody sat down, Himmler beside Rommel. "He is well watched," said a Swiss colleague.

Hitler started with his usual ironical comments on Churchill, then proceeded to a short survey of the offensive in Russia. He stressed in particular the importance of the advance to the Volga and in this connexion gave a solemn promise to take Stalingrad.

The British air attacks, he continued, would in due course be avenged. Having explained that no bourgeois state would survive this war, he ended up his short speech by a very urgent appeal to the home front to do their utmost. Every sabotage of the common effort would be checked mercilessly. All Germans would either march together towards victory or succumb together to extermination.

The last statement was a sharp admonition to those who believed it possible to detach themselves from National Socialism. The speech was otherwise delivered without the usual spark, and left the audience with an unsatisfactory impression. This was openly admitted by Germans of different categories during the following days.

A few days later Hitler's speech was supplemented. On October 6 Reichsmarschall Göring spoke to the farmers, and the German people found much more to seize on in his pronouncements than in Hitler's. Göring began by promising to give a clear summary of the economic position. He presented a sombre picture of the situation during the past year. Now, he said, it was possible to talk about it, since it had been overcome and would not be repeated. "We have conquered the most fertile areas of Europe [he obviously meant the Kuban] and we are taking a maximum from the occupied countries. The enemy should know that if there is to be starvation anywhere it will certainly not be in Germany."

Göring further explained, to the jubilation of the public, that he had ordered the meat ration to be increased by fifty grammes a week in the districts exposed to air raids, that he hoped to be able to give



the German people a Christmas gift of an extra distribution of meat and flour and other things, and that from now on every soldier on leave, on passing the German frontier, would get a food packet to take home to his relatives.

"Now, of course," Göring continued, "our enemies will say that this is an attempt to make the German people take the coming winter with equanimity, that it is a salve for the wounds. But this salve will remain throughout the war and will be increased.

"I would consider it a crime to hold out to-day a prospect to the German people of anything which I do not know for certain that I can fulfil. From now on things will become steadily better and better."

Göring satirized the 'American bluff' and swore that Hitler was a strategical genius. As far as winter was concerned, Germany was prepared this time. "This year we shall get through it easily."

An increase of the bread and meat rations as from October 19 had already been announced—the bread ration was to be again the same as before April, 2250 grammes, and the meat 350 grammes. The other improvements disclosed by Göring had been decided on in spite of strong resistance from the man in charge, Staatssekretär Backe. They were obviously considered necessary to soothe public feeling.

Göring's speech soon proved to have a positively favourable effect. The increase in rations made a very good impression, perhaps not so much in itself as because the public really accepted Göring's word that rock bottom had been reached. The average German told himself that the leaders would never have dared to make such a statement in public had there been the risk of a setback. Göring's words about the winter were interpreted in the same way. The influence of the speech was noticeable for several months. References to it could be heard as late as January.

Immediately before, another measure designed to affect public feeling favourably had been taken. It was a fairly substantial increase in invalids' allowances, pensions for soldiers' wives, and subsidies for rehabilitation. This move, in itself well founded, was one of the most important stimulants the German people were given for the approaching winter.

*Axis, Occupied Countries, and Neutrals*

Relations between Germany and her allies remained on the whole unchanged during the summer and autumn of 1942. The friction between Germans and Italians certainly increased as from time to time, and just lately, during Rommel's September offensive, the behaviour of the Italian troops in North Africa left much to be desired. But the Germans and their principal ally had for long had no illusions about each other.

The deterioration of German-Hungarian relations continued. German pressure was, however, strong enough to compel Budapest to send more forces to the East. They suffered relatively big losses. On August 20, Hungary's National Day, the Regent's son and deputy, István Horthy, perished under circumstances which have so far not been fully cleared up. Probably his plane crashed by accident, but it was characteristic that a rumour immediately appeared to the effect that the Gestapo had murdered him. He was known for his Anglo-Saxon sympathies, and that was sufficient to put the blame on the Gestapo.

However that may be, Horthy's death did not, of course, improve relations between the two countries. On September 25 the only marked pro-German member of the Hungarian Government, the Minister for Defence, General Charles de Bartha, was replaced by a man of quite different views, Colonel-General Vilmos Nagy.

A German-Hungarian incident occurred early in the autumn at the Youth Congress in Vienna. The Germans received word that the Hungarian Levente leader, General Béldy, chief of the largest Hungarian youth organization, had written in his speech that the education of Hungary's youth was based on the three factors: family, religion, and patriotism. The Germans then demanded that religion should be deleted. General Béldy refused bluntly, and when the participating Italians, Spaniards, Dutch, and Finns were informed about the situation they refused to speak if no tribute were allowed to be paid to religion. The Germans then had the ingenious idea of letting each speak in his own language and arranging a properly 'abbreviated' summary for their own newspapers.

The situation in occupied countries deteriorated rapidly. The terror regime in Norway grew worse and worse. Severe riots occurred

in Holland and Belgium and, later in the autumn, in France. The German public were now, as before, told nothing about this. The Press said nothing, and the bar against news crossing the frontiers was extremely strong.

Early in August it was disclosed in a speech by Schmidt, the deputy Reichskommissar in Holland, that representatives of the Evangelical and Catholic Churches in the country had applied to General Christiansen for better treatment of the Dutch Jews, who were being deported to the East in ever-growing numbers. Schmidt replied that the appeal would only result in a tightening up of the policy towards the Jews. Since the Dutch themselves were too squeamish Germany had now taken them over. He denied, however, reports that three million Dutchmen were scheduled to be moved to the East. The intention was only to let a maximum of 30,000 'pioneers' take over the running of certain big farms.

At about the same time the military commandant warned the Dutch not to "assist the enemy." Invasion rumours were current. The coastal provinces were evacuated and new fortifications built. A series of measures were imposed to prevent contact between the Dutch people and London. A decree was issued that all pigeons were to be slaughtered on a certain day and their feet with the rings delivered to the mayors.

A few weeks later the German long-term plans for Holland came suddenly into the limelight. Mussert, the Dutch quisling, made a speech in Lunteren against the S.S., who simply wanted to incorporate Holland in Germany under the motto "Home to the Reich." Mussert instead declared himself in favour of the idea of a Germanic League of States in which the chief of the Dutch State must have the confidence of the Führer. Scandinavia was also to be included in the League, and if the heads of these countries did not win Hitler's approval they were to be dismissed. In a later speech Mussert stated that Holland had to choose between persevering in her resistant attitude, in which case she would, after a Nazi victory, become a colony, or freely and deliberately lining up at Germany's side.

The speech roused great anger within the S.S., whose dominating faction did not recognize the Dutch as a nation on their own. But Mussert obviously had support from a higher place where it was realized that it was, at least not yet, wise to say anything about "Home to the Reich."

Deportation of Jews to the East increased in Belgium too. In the middle of August the University of Brussels was closed down for the duration. At the end of the month the opposition received a knock-out blow with the dissolution of the Caisse d'Avances et de Prêts. This institution had been founded for the repairing of war damage and the granting of loans to people in financial difficulties brought about through the war. But it had developed into an instrument for subsidies for the opposition. The Germans accused it of having granted a guarantee of 40,000,000 francs for the organization of a general strike of the judicature.

The Belgians became more and more angry, in particular when during the autumn the Germans began to deport Belgian workers to Germany. Their fury was further raised when the German authorities appeared as large-scale buyers on the black market, which pushed up prices and reduced the supply of goods. The black market was, moreover, almost the normal market for foodstuffs in Belgium.

At the end of 1942 a more cautious German attitude towards the neutrals could be observed. Turkey had always been sufficiently strong to be treated politely, and now she seemed to draw more and more away from Germany. Even Spain revealed tendencies towards a new course, which caused great anxiety. A veritable blow was Franco's decision on September 3 to remove his son-in-law, Suñer, from his post as Foreign Secretary and replace him by the monarchist Count Jordana.

During this time the German Press hardly dealt at all with Sweden, but the subject was discussed all the more at Schmidt's private *Stammtisch*. After the Swedish elections an official statement was made. Schmidt greeted the progress of the Communists with ill-concealed delight. He declared it "a European concern" which had been accurately anticipated by Germany. I remembered the rumour that the Nazis had secretly ordered their followers in Sweden to vote for the Communists.

On the whole, however, the attitude towards Sweden was polite, while an extremely sharp note was sounded against Switzerland. On October 15 Schmidt even named a number of Swiss newspapers as having been especially offensive. Germany demanded, he declared, "that neutrality be maintained." The *Weltwoche*, one of

the papers denounced, had published an article which paid tribute to the King and people of Sweden in an ostentatiously anti-German manner. The Swiss Government refuted the accusations with dignity, and no real political consequences followed upon the barrage against the Press of the country.

### **El Alamein**

Hitler had explicitly promised that Stalingrad would be taken. Detailed reports had certainly been given early in October about the tremendous losses the fighting was costing Germany. Yet when official statements made it clear that the Germans had suspended the vehement storm attacks and concentrated on artillery barrage it caused great astonishment. It was even frankly said that this had been done in order to avoid another Verdun. Instead, Stalingrad would now be bombarded to pieces.

A week later the Germans managed to take the Djershinsky establishment, and it was again announced that the final stage of the battle was in progress. A few days later twenty-four of Stalingrad's twenty-six districts were reported in German hands. The position of the Russians was stated as hopeless. But the days went past without the expected message that Stalingrad had fallen.

With every passing day, winter stamped its imprint more strongly on the war in the East. Rain fell in sheets, and it grew colder and colder. The reverse in the weather was felt particularly by the German soldiers at Stalingrad who had no proper roofs over their heads and had to watch the water rising above the floor in their mud huts.

Relative calm reigned over almost all the remaining part of the Eastern front. There had been quite a lot of talk about an impending German offensive on Leningrad. Heavy guns had been brought up, and all preparations appeared to be completed. But no offensive materialized. Finally the heavy guns were carried away again. It was said later that it had been impossible to provide the necessary support in the air.

Other problems passed into the foreground instead. In October the newspapers once again began to discuss the possibility of an Allied invasion. Once again Germany was stated to be ready wherever the Allies chose to strike. Berlin had the Atlantic coast foremost in mind, but gradually more and more commentators drew

attention to the west coast of Africa and Dakar. British and Americans dropped obscure hints in which the west coast of Africa played a prominent part. In Berlin, however, Vichy was known to have taken certain precautions to frustrate an Allied attempt to take Dakar. German experts pointed out in private that German submarines would report in good time every indication of a surprise attack and also know how to render such an attack difficult. Confidence was expressed that the French would put up effective resistance. Berlin was, of course, not inclined to admit that Germany was passively waiting for the Allies to strike. On the contrary, it was hinted that Germany could be expected to launch an offensive in the West. "In the reasonably near future," said the *Dienst aus Deutschland*, "every condition will exist for a decisive settlement with Britain." At the same time it was threatened that Germany would break away from the Geneva Convention and start an extremely brutal war of reprisals against Britain. But these were, so far, empty words. The only real threat were the submarines, and their importance was exaggerated both by the German leaders and the German public.

It may, in the light of what happened later, seem surprising that the Germans did not take more severe preventative measures even against an Allied attack on the West African coast. But it must not be forgotten that the action against Morocco and Algeria came as a real surprise, and that the position would have been entirely different had the Allies struck only against West Africa.

On October 24 the British launched their expected attack at El Alamein. Warnings had not been lacking. The Germans said they had observed a British concentration in progress indicating an impending offensive.

It was already obvious on the following day that the British attack was on a grand scale, and especially that their strength in the air was far greater than had been anticipated. The battle swiftly gathered momentum and soon reached an intensity unprecedented in North Africa. The British scheme appeared to be simply to wear out the German resources, relying on their own larger supplies and shorter communications.

On October 24 it was rumoured that Rommel, contrary to the official statement, was no longer in North Africa. This was not confirmed until much later. When the battle began to take an

alarming turn the Field-Marshal arrived by air and took over the command. His heroic efforts did not, however, succeed in stemming the British advance. On November 4 he was compelled to withdraw from the El Alamein position.

International circles in Berlin were busily asking themselves what could be the reason for the defeat; that it was a defeat was immediately clear. Eyewitnesses who soon began to arrive declared unanimously that the Germans had run short of petrol after British submarines had suddenly appeared in the Mediterranean in much greater numbers than the Germans expected and had sunk some big tankers. There was then nothing left for the German commander but to put his troops on the lorries which wasted least petrol and drive westward at full speed after having destroyed tanks and stores which could not be taken with them.

To this report were added the usual statements about Italian deception. "They deserted *lastkraftwagenweise* [in lorry-loads]," said a German pilot.

The German command before Rommel's return had not been first class, otherwise it would have withdrawn long before instead of hanging on to the far advanced El Alamein position.

It was also clear that the British had learned their lesson and were extremely well prepared when they went into action. And they had a new command. The Germans had their Rommel, the British produced Montgomery.

But Rommel saved his army by skilful tactics. He had to sacrifice one rearguard after another, detached from his main force. In this way, however, he prevented the British from achieving their aim of completely smashing the Afrika Korps.

It was soon recognized in responsible circles in Berlin that Germany had suffered a severe defeat at El Alamein. Propaganda tried to conceal the fact, hoping that Rommel would once again succeed in turning the tables. Thus on November 5 it was stated in the Wilhelmstrasse that it was only a question of an initial British success, that Montgomery had won just a little desert sand, which was of no significance, and that Rommel had brought with him all the heavy artillery, the anti-aircraft guns, etc.

Judging from the jubilation of the British, however, El Alamein was part of a larger scheme. What that involved nobody knew—in Berlin. But the answer was soon to be given.

## VII

### DOUBLE BLOW AGAINST THE AXIS

#### *The Landing in North Africa*

ON NOVEMBER 7 A BIG ALLIED CONVOY HEADING FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN was reported from the Axis look-out at La Linea, in Spain. Berlin did not seem to pay more attention to this than to other Allied attempts to carry convoys through the Mediterranean from west to east. Nothing in Berlin indicated that anything unusual was boiling up.

Then the 8th dawned. I shall never forget the complete surprise which the report of the Allied landings caused in Berlin. The amazement was as marked in the Wilhelmstrasse as among diplomats and journalists. Churchill and Roosevelt had camouflaged their intentions in a masterly way. Stalin's attacks on his allies for not establishing the second front, the discussion about tonnage in which leading Britons had said that losses threatened to paralyse the whole conduct of the war, the hints about Dakar, Eisenhower's journey to the United States—everything fitted together. In his latest speech Hitler had asked scornfully what the "military idiots" were going to do. He had now received the answer.

He had even received it in a way which to a man of his character must have been particularly trying. On the night from the 7th to the 8th Hitler had left his headquarters in East Prussia by his special train for Munich where he was going to speak on the anniversary of the Bürgerbräu coup. The radio in the train was temporarily out of order, but the German High Command had informed Prague, through which the train was to pass in the middle of the night. It was, however, directed over another line. Through this mishap Hitler was not told about the landings before the morning, just when the train was approaching Munich.

Hitler made his speech all the same. It was perhaps excusable if it mirrored some perplexity. He did not employ the usual phrase that what had happened "was not unexpected."

On the following day the Wilhelmstrasse displayed vehement exasperation over "the brutal violation of international law." The



Ministry of Propaganda and the Foreign Office were like beehives. Telephones were buzzing uninterruptedly, messengers running about, and the conference room was packed with journalists and officials. Gloom had settled on the latter. After a long wait Schmidt arrived. For once he seemed to lack his usual assurance. He declared with deep conviction that the Wilhelmstrasse was looking upon events "with ice-cold and superior calm" and that the German leaders would know how to act with speed and determination. He even explicitly asked us to consider this as an official statement.

For the rest he was cautious, but stated that the French were resisting, and that France "had been absorbed morally into the solidarity of the European countries." It was, however, as yet too early to say anything about how the Axis would help France.

Finally Schmidt satirized the Allies for having avoided the line of steel from the North Cape to Biarritz and searched out a softer spot. The irony was intended to conceal what others in the Wilhelmstrasse openly expressed in those days—their anger because the British and Americans had turned the flank of the Atlantic wall, so laboriously built up, and directed a thrust against the Axis from the south, a thrust aiming at Italy, about whose stability no German entertained any illusions.

Strangely enough, there were still certain illusions about France. On the 10th it was asserted that France could put up a successful resistance. Private pronouncements revealed that Berlin did not fully appreciate, or did not want to appreciate, that a France which could have produced this resistance simply did not exist. Whatever judgment be passed over the part the French were playing during those days, they succeeded in one thing: pulling wool over the eyes of the Germans. The Germans must certainly have been aware of the attitude of the majority of the French, but they refused up to the last moment to believe that Admiral Darlan, who had made himself known as a vehement Anglophobe, had gone over to the opposite side. They were of the same opinion about several other Frenchmen who had very cleverly camouflaged their real attitude. The Germans often gave me the impression of sheer wishful thinking. They did not want to accept the fact that they had been foxed.

From the military point of view the German leaders did everything possible. Aircraft and submarines were directed to the Mediterranean from all fields of operations. Airborne troops were

landed in Tunisia in order to save this territory at least for the Axis. Incidentally, the Italians were furious and told their brothers in arms that if they had accepted the Italian standpoint at the armistice with France in June 1940 Tunisia would now have been in the hands of Axis troops and the whole Allied action perhaps impossible.

The Axis did not score badly by their attacks on the Allied concentrations of ships. Nevertheless, the Allied losses were relatively small, since the incredible had happened—the landing was already in full swing before Berlin and Rome understood what was going on. The operation therefore developed as the greatest fiasco the German submarines had ever experienced. At the same time it was an emphatic refutation of the current opinion in Germany and Italy, according to which German and Italian submarines had so effectively harassed the Allied Merchant Navy that tonnage was not available for large-scale undertakings. The Allies had also achieved fine results in their efforts to reduce the weight of goods. Dehydration of food-stuffs and standardization of materials saved many tons.

From the German point of view the occupation of unoccupied France by German and Italian troops on November 11 was a logical step. They tried to carry it out in such a way as not to render impossible the understanding with France for which they were still hoping. In accordance with this policy they immediately declared that they considered Marshal Pétain's protest of an entirely formal character. It was strange, however, that they left Toulon in peace. The reason for this was possibly a desire not to make things too hot for Laval—and in practice the German-Italian troops seemed to control the port without actually occupying it.

Laval's position was little enviable. In Munich Hitler had told him in unvarnished terms that the occupation had started, and that all the Italian aspirations would be fulfilled. France had to be prepared to cede Corsica, Nice, the Savoy, and Tunisia. In addition she would have the honour of declaring war on Britain and the United States. What Laval had to say to this has not been recorded. He probably wondered whether the policy of collaboration had paid. But the Germans obviously still placed some hopes on Laval.

A well-known specialist on France in the Wilhelmstrasse declared to some foreign journalists that in his opinion Laval had a 100 per cent. of the French people behind him. It sounds like a joke, but it was not meant to be.

The Germans were hoping up to the last moment to see a new ally in France. On November 17 the measures taken by the French Government were described as meaning "that the Axis and France are determined to organize a common defence."

The reconstruction of the French Government soon after the Allied attack on North Africa attracted an interest in Berlin during the first week after its announcement quite out of proportion to the significance of this event. At the same time Schmidt stated with fitting modesty that Germany had, of course, nothing whatever to do with the matter—"it is not our method to interfere with the composition of Governments of other countries; that is the most elementary privilege of every state."

This declaration, which to every sensible person appeared the limit of hypocrisy, particularly in the light of the recent German moves in Denmark, was delivered by Schmidt with deep feeling. That most of his listeners saw through the humbug did not bother him in the least. But the faces of those present were a sight.

After some time the Wilhelmstrasse had found their line with regard to the French problem. It was expressed in continued reverence for the Marshal, confidence in Laval, and contempt for those who had "betrayed France," in other words, above all for Darlan. The Germans thus continued to maintain the fiction of an *official* France existing as a sovereign State in spite of the Armistice restrictions, and that this France could be played against "the traitors." The Nazis were also speculating on the controversies between the British and the Americans in North Africa. Personally I have seldom witnessed such exultation as was displayed when Willkie's attack on the British Empire and the opinions aired in the American periodicals *Life* and *Time* became known. And we were told privately, "If we perish the British will at least not draw any benefit from the victory." This attitude was, in fact, one of the guiding motives behind the Nazi war policy. Somehow Hitler and his advisers would be less downcast about an American or Russian victory. A British victory would be the bitterest cup of all. This may appear anything but a realistic attitude. But Nazi Germany is far from realistic. The Nazis looked upon Britain in very much the same way as they looked upon their internal political adversaries.

The policy towards France remained unchanged even after Hitler

and Mussolini had decided to complete the occupation by entering Toulon. Of great interest is the letter from Hitler to Pétain published on the day of the occupation of Toulon. It was a strange document to which future analysts of Hitler's character will certainly attach some importance. The letter was written as if addressed to Germans instead of Frenchmen. It started with a long summary of Hitler's uninterrupted peace endeavours and efforts to create good relations with France. It contained no argument which could possibly impress Frenchmen. In the Wilhelmstrasse this letter was exhibited as evidence of the magnanimity with which the Führer treated Germany's historic enemy.

From a military point of view the occupation of Southern France was not, of course, a sufficient counter-blow to the Allied conquest of Morocco, Algeria, and French West Africa. For such a counter-blow either Spain or Turkey would have to be penetrated. And sure enough, both these countries became, one after the other, a primary concern of the Nazis.

On November '12 German troops had reached the Franco-Spanish border. During the following days very strong forces were concentrated there. The Spaniards in Berlin suddenly became very nervous and confessed that they expected a German march into Spain proper and an Italian occupation of the Balearics. Major Sommerfeldt also made comments indicating that something of the kind would happen. On the 13th and 14th he said that within the course of a week the position would be "fundamentally changed," and that one would then have to face "an entirely new situation." Late in the evening, on the 14th, an official declared to an intimate circle that the march into Spain would take place a few hours later along the whole frontier. The accuracy of this statement has been confirmed by other sources. At the last minute, however, came a counter-order. Why, I do not know for certain. General Franco is said to have given clear notice that Spain would fight in all circumstances. If he did not take the lead the Spaniards would fight in any case.

After this political circles in Berlin quickly switched their attention from the Western Mediterranean to the Eastern, from Spain to Turkey. From November 20 the Turks in Berlin prepared themselves for the worst. They did not conceal that they anticipated a German attack before long and referred to troop concentrations in Bulgaria, on the Ægean islands—to which, according to Turkish

sources, reinforcements were sent nightly by air—and in Greece. Furthermore, there was the anti-Turkish propaganda in Bulgaria and the behaviour of this country on the whole. An attack on Turkey, however, would obviously have been an act of desperation. It would not have given Germany any decisive advantage since Rommel's position by this time hardly promised any successful use of the pincer tactics against the Middle East.

Rommel had lost material and men, and up to the end of November he had been reinforced only by one division apart from the garrisons he had been able to release during his retreat. He had been sending one SOS after another to Berlin. He was said to have asked for sixteen divisions in order to turn the tables in North Africa.

Rommel's position appeared in fact almost catastrophic before it became clear that Germans and Italians would be able to hold a bridgehead in Tunisia. A Dunkirk operation from Tripolitania must have cost enormous losses.

On November 15 it was admitted in Berlin—as everybody had known for several days—that German and Italian troops had landed in Tunisia. From then on official spokesmen and German newspapers always linked the fighting in Cyrenaica and Tunisia together in dealing with the situation in North Africa. Rommel's evacuation of Tobruk was explained as a matter of course since, as Sommerfeldt said, President Roosevelt had given him a much better supply base, namely Tunisia.

On the 18th a new phase in the African campaign was stated to be in progress. The balance had become more stable, and a tough fight for the supply lines was developing. At the beginning of December the Germans were so strongly reinforced that they were able to repulse British and American attempts to throw the Axis troops into the sea with heavy losses for the attackers. The Allies were forced to turn to a methodical conquest which would prove a lengthy affair.

### *Russia Attacks*

With winter approaching on the Eastern front the prospect of a possible Russian offensive arose. Strong Russian troop concentrations were reported from time to time, causing some anxiety in military circles in Berlin.

Privately almost every German expert held the opinion that

the positions of the German Army after the summer offensive were the worst possible. Hitler's inclination for "making the impossible possible" had resulted in neither Stalingrad nor the Caucasus being taken. It was stated frankly that the German lines north of the Caucasus would not be able to hold a strong Russian drive. These statements were first combined with hopes that the German offensive would be resumed in November with the objective of definitely taking Stalingrad as well as the area from Stalingrad along the Volga to Astrakhan, and from there along the coast of the Caspian Sea to Makhach-Kala. In this way an acceptable winter line might be established. Gradually, however, it became obvious that the German offensive power had petered out. Then the idea of a general retreat to better positions was mooted.

But there was little doubt among those who had studied the military manifestations of Hitler's mentality that he would choose the solution which had proved practicable in the previous year—standing by. Conditions had, however, been different then.

The German public was given no guidance as to what to expect. The newspapers confined themselves to pointing out that Germany was now prepared in an entirely different way from 1941 for a winter campaign and could look forward to it with confidence. Out of the 1941 improvisations had been built up a proper defence system. This, it was said, was true in particular of those areas where communications had been disorganized during the previous year. Nothing was said about the areas conquered in 1942. Communications were, in fact, much worse than they had been in those conquered in 1941. The good winter equipment and the improvements in tactics were further stressed.

If Hitler had had a retreat in mind he in any case lingered too long. The Russians attacked on November 19, with the main weight concentrated at Stalingrad and the Middle Don. Berlin draped itself in silence, but in face of the Russian communiqués about big victories it was quietly admitted that they had had some successes. As regards Stalingrad, this was explained by two Italian divisions suddenly having yielded and exposed the flank of their German comrades. On November 23 it was stated officially in Berlin that the Russian offensive at Stalingrad was on a very large scale, and that certain "local penetrations" had been made. The Russians had made some progress also in the Don bend. Here they had benefited

greatly from the bridgehead on the southern bank of the river at Kletskaya which they had maintained in spite of all German efforts. They had also skilfully taken advantage of the fact that the Germans had been obliged to leave the defence of the Middle Don mainly in the hands of Italians and Rumanians.

According to Major Sommerfeldt, the Russian offensive had been started earlier than originally intended in order to time it with the Allied action against North Africa. The Russians had been favoured by the autumn fog which had rendered strong assistance from the German Air Force impossible.

On the 24th a sensationally phrased report arrived. The Russians were said to have broken into the defence line at the Don thanks to a ruthless employment of men and materials. Counter-measures were, however, developing. Their purpose, we were told, was not to restore the *status quo*, but to turn the whole affair into a Russian defeat. In their counter-action—the word counter-offensive was still not used—the Germans had thrown in new weapons, among other things a new machine-gun or rather a combination of machine-guns with a firing-capacity of three thousand rounds a minute and a tank with a flame-thrower.

The officials in the Wilhelmstrasse and well-informed people now began to display real anxiety. Would it be possible to stop the Russians? They were far from sure about that. "The Rumanians run like rabbits, and the Italians are little better," a German officer told me. He added that German troops had been brought up to the Middle Don and replaced the yielding Italians and Rumanians. Towards the end of the month the atmosphere calmed down a little, the lines having been somewhat stabilized.

At the same time a violent battle was in progress between Kalinin and Toropets, where the Russians had broken into the German line. The Russians were, however, cut off and annihilated. The Germans here succeeded in holding their positions better than expected. A month earlier the German capital had been worrying about the Russian troop concentrations between Kalinin and Toropets. An officer declared in private that the German High Command did not even know from where these Russian troops were coming. Further, he said the position Velikie Luki-Rjev was in itself unfavourable as it could be taken from two sides.

But in spite of the relatively satisfactory situation in the Kalinin

area, the whole state of affairs on the Eastern front was very serious, above all on account of the threat to Stalingrad. In Berlin some observers already considered the German Army group there of twenty-two divisions virtually cut off. People were, however, still waiting for the big German counter-attack. But one December week followed the other without any sign of it, although in the middle of the month the large German "winter reserves" were said to have been moved up.

It was imperative for the success of a German counter-offensive that the weather should allow full employment of the Air Force, and that the Luftwaffe was strong enough to deal the Russians a real blow. This was far from certain as the Luftwaffe had been steadily on the decline with regard to its relative fighting value and its numerical strength. At the end of October a leading German expert estimated the Russian aircraft production as 1200 planes a month, while the Germans could manufacture no more than 1600, and the Allied production amounted altogether to at least 5200 planes a month. Another negative factor was the health situation. A few months earlier Professor Sauerbruch, Germany's foremost surgeon, had declared to an intimate few that it would be a mistake to expect the German soldier to be capable of standing up to this winter better than to the previous one. The reduced and irregular feeding, the physical weariness of those who had been in Russia since 1941, and the inferior quality of the youngest and oldest classes as well as of the reservists of various categories, were circumstances working in the opposite direction. The physical weakening would also, he pointed out, have psychic effects in the form of increased irritability, etc., which would in their turn make the soldiers more susceptible to the cold.

Another drawback was that the Germans had not been able to curb the partisans. These were slowing down all the movements of the Wehrmacht, hampering their supplies, and so forth. From Leningrad to the Caucasus came the same story of the increasing numbers of partisans, of their growing impudence, and, last but not least, of how the partisan warfare was moving westward.

By this time the partisans were appearing on a large scale in the Ukraine, where they, in 1941, had not yet been operating in great numbers. In the Generalgouvernement they were slowly advancing westward, and even from Wartheland reports arrived indicating that



the Poles there had indulged in partisan activities. In the Baltic States the Germans had to reckon with the partisans in about the same way as the British and Americans had to reckon with the German submarines at sea.

Even the smaller partisan groups were in communication by radio with the regular Russian troops. If their position threatened to become untenable Russian planes, summoned by radio, intervened in the fighting.

All reports were unanimous in pointing out that the German troops had not found a remedy against the partisans. In daytime they were Russian workers in German service, and by night they were soldiers. To try to separate the sheep from the goats was considered impracticable, especially as the goats were so numerous.

In addition to these unfavourable factors, the superior winter tactics of the Russians should be particularly stressed.

### *The New Political Situation: Break-away of the Neutrals and Satellite Unrest*

The Anglo-American landing in North Africa and the Russian offensive precipitated a development in foreign policy the first signs of which had been noticeable long before—the attitude of the neutrals towards Germany underwent a striking change. Many circles in neutral countries had early become convinced that Germany would lose the war. The great majority was also pro-Allied in sympathy. When Britain and the United States now proved themselves capable of delivering a hard blow against the Axis and of moving their positions considerably forward the automatic consequence in all neutral countries was an increased confidence in the Allies and a more determined attitude towards Germany. Hitherto several neutral States had been compelled to stand more than one affront from the Germans. Now the neutrals' tone at once grew firmer.

More than that—unrest mounted within satellite and occupied countries, progressively undermining the structure of the New Order. The same tendency prevailed throughout Europe. The Germans suddenly saw, or should have seen, to what extent Germany had been deprived, through the Nazi policy, of all sympathies and become isolated. Many Germans felt this and were terrified. The

"battle of sympathies," which Germany, according to Schmidt, had won, was, on the contrary, lost—for reasons which should be obvious to anyone.

"The break-away of the neutrals," to quote an outstanding German's summary of the situation, did not pass unnoticed in Berlin. The neutral Press was made to feel this, too. Political circles in Berlin were especially irritated by the Swedish and Swiss newspapers which were recognized as barometers of the hopes of their respective peoples. Even their Berlin correspondents were considered to have become more impertinent. One day early in December, at a Press conference, the quislings' leader, Grundvig Gundersen, asked a question about the flights over Swiss territory, a question which everybody knew was prearranged. The foreign correspondents as a rule did not divulge that certain questions were 'ordered in advance' in this way, nor was it possible for them to make any use of the fact. But this time the devil got into a Swiss colleague, the correspondent of *Die Tat*, and he wrote, "The correspondent of the Norwegian (Quisling) Government's paper to-day asked for comments on the flights over Swiss territory. The apparently desired question gave Dr Schmidt the opportunity to make a statement." On the following day Schmidt was like a thundercloud. He read out some lines from the article and declared that he protested "against such an unparalleled defamation of the Press conferences." Gundersen, generally called "The Lord Admiral," brick-red in the face, wanted to express his indignation, but Schmidt, who well knew Gundersen's ability to excite general ridicule by his bombast, cut him short with, "The matter is closed."

A few days later the Swedes were reprimanded. There had been instances of foreign correspondents using 'obscure sources' instead of the Press conferences, said Schmidt. "The principal task of several correspondents here appears to be to give information to the American journalists in Stockholm and to provide the American Legation there with material for their bulletins. I wish to stress once again that the Press conferences should decide the tenor and tendency of the dispatches. I advise you to make use of the conferences, either actively by asking questions, or passively by coming here, and not like the Swedish journalists who send a single colleague here as observer." Schmidt finally threatened that Berlin could easily manage with fewer foreign correspondents.

We Swedes had, in fact, taken largely to the habit of staying away from Schmidt's conferences, mainly because we so very seldom could extract anything of journalistic value from them. At the beginning of the autumn of 1942, when questions had become more and more scarce—since practically all questions of any interest were not replied to—the conference leaders had introduced the system of reading out 'reports received.' These readings could have been very interesting, but they soon developed into endless propaganda lectures to which many of us had neither the time nor the desire to listen for six days a week.

Berlin's discontent did not extend only to the Swedish Press and its representatives. Official Sweden was mistrusted, too. The Swedish call-up in December, for example, raised the question: against whom is Sweden really mobilizing?

More serious for Germany than Switzerland's and Sweden's adoption of a firmer policy were the changes in Spain, Portugal, and Turkey. In Madrid the Germans had enjoyed certain sympathies and an obvious influence on the leaders. But during the late autumn of 1942 the Spaniards began slowly but surely to detach themselves from Berlin. "We are turning from non-belligerents to neutrals," said the Spanish colleagues in Berlin. Germany had been imprudent enough to oppose with every possible means a restoration of the Spanish monarchy, and since monarchist feelings in Spain were rapidly growing, public opinion became more and more anti-German. When General Franco, on December 9, gave some hint of the possibility of a restitution of the monarchy the German Press cut this in their summaries of the speech.

At the end of the year well-informed circles in Berlin had, in fact, given up Spain for lost. Again, Portugal had certainly shown a general anti-Communist attitude. Decisive, however, was the ostentatious tribute the country paid to her ally, Britain. This made it clear that Germany had nothing to hope from Salazar.

The march into Turkey which many expected at the end of November, did not occur. The German Press reported from time to time Allied attempts to make capital of events in North Africa and complained that the semi-official Turkish news-agency, Agence d'Anatolie, had entirely taken the side of the Allies in their news service. The Turkish radio too was stated to have adopted an uncompromisingly pro-Allied attitude, and the *Essener Nationalzeitung*

lamented over the Turkish Government's not having put a stop to these deviations from neutrality. But so far no political consequences followed upon these incidents.

Italy was the only country among Germany's confederates immediately influenced by the Allied action in North Africa. Italy had wanted to occupy Tunisia in 1940, but that did not suit Germany then. Now Italy found the war right on her doorstep. Hitler's sudden announcement to France that all the Italian aspirations to French territories would be fulfilled was perhaps a sort of apology on his side, simultaneously designed as an encouragement to the Italians. The effect in Italy, however, could not be the same now as earlier, since everybody must have asked if it was still in Germany's power to carry out her promises.

Influential quarters in Italy had long been of the opinion that their country should leave the Axis partnership. Reports from various parts of the country told of demonstrations for the Royal House and for peace. But the discussion which was carried on towards the end of 1942 about an Italian armistice was lacking practical directions as to how Italy could get out of the situation in which she found herself. Only the initiated know what message Myron Taylor, Roosevelt's special envoy to the Pope, carried to him. Whatever it was, there appeared to be no immediate consequence to his visit.

Even if Italy was not ripe for a 'peace offensive' it was characteristic that she tried to disengage herself from the military commitments which hitherto had been Mussolini's pride. Italian divisions were leaving the Balkans to an increasing extent, and even in the Dalmatian fortresses—in other words, areas which were officially Italian—Italians were replaced by Germans.

More and more news arrived about growing anxiety within the Italian forces in the Balkans. In Zagreb the Italian military attaché was reported to have declared that the war was lost, and that Hitler would now have to carry on with it alone. The Italian Minister in the Croat capital even had his furniture and personal belongings sent home to Italy.

Italy's dispositions influenced Germany's other allies in the South-east. Hungary started emergency preparations for a defence on her own of the Carpathian frontier and tried in various other ways to improve her political and military situation.

In Croatia things became more and more confused. Since the summer of 1941 wide areas had been controlled by the various groups of partisans. There was hostility between the followers of General Mihailovich, who considered themselves as regular troops answerable to the Yugoslav Government, and the Communists who purported to act on behalf of Moscow. But both groups fought against Pavelich's followers.

The basis for the rebellion was the fact that more than 1·8 millions of Croatia's population were Serbs. If the new Croatian regime had at least been more flexible in their treatment of this section of the population it would perhaps have kept quiet for the time being. But the terror exercised over the Serbs above all by the Ustashe, made all the Serbs feel in a state of compulsion, having nothing to lose by open armed resistance. Scores of Serbs were streaming into the forests, where they organized themselves as best they could. Their first reply to the Croat terror was murder and plunder, but gradually a more systematic warfare developed.

Towards the end of 1942 the partisans in Croatia were encouraged by the Allied African landing and perhaps even more by Rommel's retreat. They had lively contacts with Cairo. At times there was even a daily courier-plane traffic. It was certainly through influence from abroad that the tactics of the partisans were gradually changed and became really dangerous to the Germans and their confederates. The partisans began to leave the Catholic churches and clergy in peace and tried to establish a *modus vivendi* with them. Administration within the areas they controlled was steadily improved. A Croat official once told me about the priest whom he knew in a place which was occupied by partisans. When the clergyman fell ill the local partisan chief gave him a pass with permit to go to Zagreb for eight days in order to be properly examined. When members of a partisan command in a little town took the medicine supplies from the chemist they gave proper receipts and returned a few days later with the payment. Such stories spread like wildfire throughout the country.

One of the most important prerequisites for the partisan activities in Croatia—and in Serbia and Montenegro too, where, however, they were less active—was the double game to which the Italians committed themselves. Why they did so, is not quite clear. Part of the explanation is probably that they quite simply wanted to buy

themselves peace. However that may be, the partisans got arms, ammunition, and food from them.

The fact that Pavelich had managed to get on the wrong side of the Catholic Church contributed to the chaos in Croatia. The Archbishop of Zagerb made a thunderous recriminatory speech in the Cathedral, damning the treatment of the Jews.

There was a good deal of talk about Pavelich's being compelled to resign. But the Germans kept him on, just as they stuck stubbornly to others of their tools. In point of fact he was already in 1942 politically dead. Even his closest followers expressed in private circles their pleasure over the influence which Dr Krnjević, the Croat member of the Yugoslav London Government, had obtained.

The Allied landing in North Africa was a hard blow to the pro-Germans in Rumania. The German influence in that country had been far stronger than, for example, in Hungary. Rumania had occupied a special position as Germany's first favourite. In spite of that, rather influential Rumanian circles wanted to free the country from her dependence on Germany.

The Slovaks were also becoming hesitant and looked round for a chance to quit the game—in case Germany should lose the war. In Finland the Allied action even caused a Governmental crisis. On the whole it shook the faith in Germany's overwhelming power, and considerably weakened the Axis system of alliances. In addition to this, it strengthened the neutrals in their endeavour to pursue their own political line.

The Japanese were growing more and more pessimistic. Their diplomats in Berlin were from time to time said to have advised the Germans to alter their policy towards the occupied countries, referring to "the success of their own tolerant behaviour." The Germans in their turn were restive because of the long pause in the Japanese advance, and advised their ally to try to come to an agreement with China at all costs in order to free their hands for throwing their weight against the Soviet Union. The German Press displayed great interest in the Japanese 'peace offensives' on Chungking, and Germans expressed their great disappointment when they failed.

*New Hope for the Occupied Countries*

The Allied landing in North Africa was an igniting spark to all occupied peoples in Europe. It worked as a stimulus to continued resistance and an indication that the hour of liberation was approaching. This impression was strengthened by the news from the Eastern front.

There was one occupied country, however, which was directly affected and whose position was entirely altered—France. The Vichy policy virtually broke to pieces. The conditions on which it had built its middle way between the Allies and Germany ceased to exist. And through their passivity during the critical days the French lost their chance for rehabilitating themselves when the Germans marched in. It has later been maintained that Marshal Pétain and General Weygand had made preparations for flying to North Africa, in order to take up from there the fight together with their earlier allies. Weygand was captured immediately by treachery before he was able to leave. Had the Marshal and the General escaped the French nation would once again have had something to rally round, even though their overwhelming majority would have felt the pressure of the occupying Power much more strongly. But nothing happened. The men of Vichy watched the German occupation with folded arms. The reorganized French Armistice Army, "L'Armée Nouvelle," was not given an opportunity to fire a single shot before it was dissolved.

It has been said that Pétain's and Laval's passivity was largely dictated by their hope of sparing their countrymen from an increased German pressure by staying where they were and keeping their countenance. History will perhaps confirm this, but their failure to go had demoralizing effects on the French nation to an extent which certainly neutralized the advantages of carrying on with the comedy.

That it was a comedy the Germans had by now realized. It had taken time before Berlin understood that Germany could barely rely on a single Frenchman—Laval not excluded. But even after this had been generally recognized it was in the German interest to carry on the game with 'official France.' On November 21 Schmidt declared that the French Prime Minister and Marshal Pétain had "made themselves worthy of the esteem of every European patriot."

But at the same time he said that the only thing on which France and Laval could rely was unfortunately the German and Italian generals. The tone sharpened when it appeared that the Germans could not make Laval declare war on Britain and the United States. In private talks the Wilhelmstrasse officials did not conceal their resentment at the unscrupulousness with which the French had fooled the Germans. Neither Pétain's nor Laval's person was spared. Schmidt was quoted widely as having said of Pétain, "That dotard does not know black from white after nine o'clock in the evening."

The German Press expressed their discontent at an early stage. The opening was made by the provincials. Shortly afterwards the Berlin papers spoke up. One paper stated that energetic measures were necessary to awaken the French people from their lethargy, but that there were people in Laval's immediate circle who opposed every firm action. At the end of November the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* wrote that Darlan's treason had caused great surprise in Germany since the Germans had a strong feeling for honour and expected the same in others. "In Darlan we saw an officer, Anglophobe by tradition, who having understood the significance of the defeat had put his person entirely at the service of the New Order." But, the paper lamented, where Germany was concerned the average Frenchman was either taken in by prejudice or completely blind. He could be polite and charming but would break without hesitation every word of honour given to Germany. If he declared himself in favour of co-operation he thought he was conferring a favour. However convincing Laval's words, their effect would still be very weak; the average Frenchman would not believe in what he said. "Pétain himself is, of course, originally no Germanophile. He cannot be. His idea is obviously that France will survive one way or another, and that it is his vocation to embody this survival." Laval, the paper continued, was the man of the European-minded France. His was not a creative mind, he was no ideological fanatic, but a politician who wisely weighed up a position. "In himself he is certainly no more pro-German than Pétain. He is only gifted with clearer insight."

Finally the paper pointed out that Laval's methods were too much influenced by his parliamentary past.

On December 10 the German Foreign Office organ, the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, referring to Pétain's frequent speeches about "eternal



France" which would rise from the ashes, stated that a sober German observer could only see the ashes but no sign of the resurrection. The French military collapse had been followed by a moral disintegration still in progress, and the French people were a dispirited, amorphous mass.

An even stronger salvo was fired a few days later when Josef Berdolt, the Vichy correspondent of the *Danziger Vorposten*, recorded the critical days in a way which fully revealed that the Vichy Government had had covert dealings with the British and Americans. The German journalist described how Darlan had taken an endless array of suitcases with him in the plane when he went officially to Algeria to see his sick son, and how Vichy had issued bulletins prepared in advance for the occasion about the 'heroic resistance' of the French which in actual fact was bogus. The French troops in Algeria stayed in their barracks, and the officers stood on the quay welcoming the Americans. Although Darlan was negotiating with the Allies, Pétain, on November 8, expressed telegraphically his special confidence in him. Even on November 9 the Vichy Ministry of Information issued 'war communiqués', produced from the drawers of its writing-desk. When, Berdolt said, Germans and Italians marched in Pétain's protest was broadcast for a long period over French stations, and Darlan was not repudiated by Pétain before November 14.

In spite of all this, official Berlin continued to maintain the fiction that the Vichy Government was a worthy contracting party. Every possible juristic subtlety was employed to make it appear that relations between France, in other words Vichy, and Germany were still regulated by the Armistice, even though it had undergone some slight modifications.

This attitude may have had some connexion with a certain tendency towards a milder treatment of the occupied countries. The change was most marked in the East. The unfortunate Poles, since 1939 treated like animals, were suddenly given some indications that they were after all human beings. And a Lithuanian deputation which arrived in Berlin early in December received a benevolent if not hearty reception.

The first sign of a tendency to relax the terror against the Poles was that their bread rations were raised in the beginning of December from 2000 to 2250 grammes a week. Something even more

remarkable occurred at the end of the month when Gauleiter Arthur Greiser made a speech in Poland which seemed to herald a new policy towards the Poles. He declared that they would be given a chance to lead "a materially secure life" as *Schutzangehörige des Deutschen Reiches* ("protected members of the German Reich") provided they complied in action and spirit with the unconditional German claim to exercise the leadership. "Polish man-power is at its best and feels at its best when under the fruitful leadership of the German element," said Greiser, and went on to announce to the Poles that they were being given a new social insurance and a new medical service, and that two sanatoria for consumptives had been established. Then, as a real sensation, came the announcement of the creation of a Polish "crack organization" which would consist of "the working-minded section of the Poles." Members of this organization would be allowed to wear a special badge entitling them to priority treatment in buying commodities, dealing with the authorities, etc.

Other occupied countries could also observe a certain relaxation in the German regime. In Denmark Dr Best's moderate policy was continued. General surprise was caused when the new Danish Government did not include any representative of the Danish Nazi Party.

In Holland, on the other hand, the pressure was undiminished. On November 21 it was announced that fifteen Dutch saboteurs had been executed, and, simultaneously, that executions would henceforth take the form of hangings. In December the occupying authorities gave the Dutch Nazi Party more power by allowing them influence on the administration. Dr Max Blokzijl, Mussert's chief of propaganda, complained, however, of the conservatism of the Dutch population. Workers, farmers, and teachers were unteachable, he said, and only the youth showed any understanding.

In Norway there were rumours to the effect that Quisling would be sacked, but it appeared that the Germans had arrived at an impasse in their Norwegian policy. The German representative, Reichskommissar Terboven, had managed to make himself so hated that not even the unbending, impossible Seyss-Inquart could compete with him.

In Alsace, some Germans from the Reich who had misbehaved were expelled, and Gauleiter Wagner foreshadowed further interventions against Germans who acted irresponsibly. He addressed

an earnest exhortation to all Germans from the Reich to set a good example in Alsace. General indignation had been roused there by Germans from the Reich behaving as if they were in a defeated enemy country, although conscription to the German Army for all Alsations had been introduced during the autumn.

One of Wagner's statements revealed that the Allied landing in North Africa had also made an impression in Alsace. He said that there were "asses who believed that the Americans would arrive in Alsace." In December the *Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten* complained that unknown persons had begun to scribble "1918" on the walls.

### *Crisis—and Peace Feelers*

The Allied invasion of North Africa and the Russian victories brought about a moral crisis in Germany far more serious than 'the winter crisis' in 1941. In November 1942 many Germans were compelled to realize that their leaders, whose technical efficiency had previously not been questioned, had proved inferior to those of the Allies. In spite of all his boasting, Hitler had been caught napping and his 'super' strategy in the East had brought the Wehrmacht into a serious plight.

At the beginning of December an announcement was made which struck many Germans as a 'writing on the wall.' Colonel-General Halder, considered as the brain of the German Army, had been replaced as Chief of the General Staff. The name of his successor was unknown not only to the German public, but to the great majority of the German officers. The name was Zeitzler. As late as January he had been a colonel. Nobody seemed to know how Hitler had got hold of him. But when the round, good-humoured face of the new Chief of Staff was reproduced in the papers many felt that Hitler had been forced to search pretty far in order to find some one who was willing and rash enough to take on the responsibility for the Führer's conduct of the war after the resignation of his internationally reputed predecessor. Zeitzler was appointed major-general on January 31, 1943, then in rapid succession lieutenant-general, general, and Chief of the General Staff. This was an unparalleled career for a forty-seven-year-old man who twelve months earlier had been an unknown colonel.

There was little reason to believe that General Zeitzler would

dare to have a different opinion about strategy from the Supreme Commander. The change must therefore be assumed to indicate that the latter would more than ever stamp his imprint on the conduct of the war. This prospect caused gloom even in the most faithful Party circles.

Halder was not the only one to go. General Jodl, who had acted for a long time as Hitler's personal adviser, threw in his hand too.

Leading circles in Berlin had before November 8 already arrived at the opinion that the situation was extremely serious. One day in October Dr Goebbels invited some of the most prominent German journalists in Berlin to his home and told them bluntly that Germany had lost the war. "The only thing which remains for us to hope for," said Goebbels, "is a miracle. Nur eine handddünne Schicht scheidet uns vom Abgrund." ("Only a hair's breadth separates us from the abyss.") Realization of the real situation had also penetrated deep down. And the officials found it more and more difficult to keep up an unperturbed appearance in front of the foreign correspondents and carry on with the familiar propaganda clichés. Reports about pessimistic statements by leading personalities were mounting up. One of the more current reports quoted Reichsminister Funk's wife as having said to Frau Frick in the presence of several people, "The Führer is leading us right into disaster," to which Frau Frick was said to have replied, "Yes, he's a lunatic."

The general deterioration appears to have induced the German leaders to make one or two serious attempts to bring about an acceptable peace. Spain was used as chief instrument for establishing contact with the Western Powers, but with no tangible results.

Throughout the German-Russian war there has been a steady flow of rumours about a separate peace between Germany and Russia. This has in most cases been nothing but German wishful dreaming, but in some cases there was reason to assume a more concrete foundation for the rumours.

It is thus reasonably certain that the Japanese were trying all the time, and particularly in the autumn of 1942, to mediate a separate peace between Germany and Russia. The fact that Germany and Russia were carrying the heaviest burdens of the war provided a starting-point. The Germans, therefore, pointed out to the Russians that the position of Britain and the United States would become uncomfortably strong if the two Continental Powers continued to

wear each other out. The Russians may have had some understanding for this argument, just as they could share Hitler's frequently pronounced opinion that the Allies delayed the second front *deliberately*. But it was a long step from this to a definite rupture with the Allies.

The Germans, however, were obviously hopeful in the late autumn. Leave passes for soldiers on the Eastern front sometimes contained a notification that in the event of an armistice the holder should not return to the front but report to this or that office at home. There were also rumours that von Papen had met Molotov and had had a preliminary talk with him. Later on it was established that the whole attempt had failed.

But there was a further alternative. In November, after the initial Russian successes, one of the Party leaders was said to have declared that even if the situation in the East became untenable the Nazis would, whatever happened, prevent the British and Americans from being victorious. Hitler was reported to share this view. Reference was made to his statement, "If I fall the whole world will fall with me." This would be effected by Hitler's simply letting the Russians into Europe on a broad front.

I asked how it would be possible to put this scheme into practice. The reply was that it was quite feasible to reinforce all the fronts against the British and Americans, while weakening the Eastern front and yielding to the Russian pressure there. A suitable psychological preparation for Bolshevism in Germany would be the discovery of a bourgeois plot against the Führer and, as a consequence, the execution of some fifty thousand 'traitors' from the bourgeois classes. Then one might turn to open terror, thus preparing the most favourable soil for Bolshevism. After that Hitler himself would, of course, disappear, be killed in the East or something like that, whereafter the left wing of the Party, headed by Geobbel, would go over to Stalin. In this way the Russians could be in the heart of Europe before the German people had grasped what was going on and been able to take any counter-measures.

The idea may seem fantastic, but there is no doubt that a solution of this kind would have appealed to Hitler's mentality. He would then go down in history as the great man who had tried to liberate Europe from the danger of Bolshevism but had fallen through Britain's and America's treachery.

I must admit that the whole scheme became a veritable nightmare to me. The more I thought of it, the more possible it seemed. It was a fair assumption that Hitler and those ready to follow him on this final desperate course would camouflage their intentions up to the last moment. From where, moreover, would they meet with resistance? From the hamstrung German generals, for long placed under the strongest Gestapo surveillance? From Göring? Hardly. And even if Göring or the generals wanted to take action they would in any case be too late.

I told myself many times that the idea was nevertheless absurd. But the next moment I had to admit that there was no definite obstacle to it from the purely psychological point of view. There was no difficulty in visualizing Goebbels playing his part; and would not Schmidt represent a Bolshevized Germany with the same high-handedness as a Nazi Germany? One might certainly object that none of these gentlemen would survive a Bolshevik regime. But who could be definitely sure of that? What was, in fact, known about the Russian attitude? Was it not possible that Stalin would be prepared to give adaptable Nazis a chance? Would he refuse to accept anything which was in reality a capitulation to *him*? However that may be, the fact is that among the minor officials within the Party to whom the idea slowly filtered through there were many who counted on saving their own skins by sporting the hammer and sickle at the right moment. "We should be good Bolsheviks," said one of them to me. There is no reason to doubt that.

So far things have not developed in this direction. Perhaps the whole story was a clever device to frighten the bourgeoisie into continuing the fight for Hitler. But the specific background at the time must not be forgotten. The whole situation at the end of 1942 was very uncertain, and the Allies were still relatively weak. Now, in the autumn of 1943, the alternative dealt with above would seem improbable. But a contemplation of Britain's and America's position in 1942 throws a different light on the matter.

### *The Third Reich and the Anglo-Saxon Powers*

The Nazis consider Britain their principal enemy. Their feelings towards this country are about the same as their feelings were towards their internal opponents—there is a personal element involved.

Simultaneously the Nazis have a feeling of inferiority towards the British.

Many Germans feel in their heart of hearts that Britain always wins the last battle. They also entertain a certain instinctive admiration for the British. This often finds unexpected expression. Even the most hardened Nazi could not help admiring the British nation during the days of the 'blitz.' Now and again one would hear such statements as: "They are of Germanic race after all." The Nazis have, of course, been conscious of these feelings and done their best to counteract them. Not even their propaganda campaign against the Jews could compare with their propaganda against Britain. No opportunity has been left unexploited to stress the infamy, the cowardice, and the weakness of the British—it has been mainly these three qualities which they have aimed at bringing home.

Politically Britain has, at any cost, been represented as standing on the verge of Bolshevization. With this end in view Schmidt has performed the most amazing somersaults. Cripps' entry into the War Cabinet was interpreted as decisive evidence that Britain's transmutation into a Soviet Republic was only a question of time. Schmidt had nothing to say about "Bolshevization" when Cripps left the Cabinet.

It was often painful to foreigners to witness the excesses of German anti-British propaganda. The interview given by Rommel in the presence of Goebbels made a deep impression on the foreign correspondents in Berlin. The Field-Marshal stated that his opponents were cowards and fought with dishonourable methods. "We have beaten them," he continued, and made hardly any secret of his conviction that the Germans would conquer Egypt. This was about a week before the British attack at El Alamein.

It was not the boasting in itself which shocked us so much as the insults to the British. No one could fail to remember the unconcealed British admiration for Rommel. The admiration which the representatives of the foreign Press in Berlin had felt for Rommel disappeared in one stroke. "He is certainly a great soldier, but he is definitely not a great personality," was the general verdict.

German acquaintances to whom I quoted Rommel's statements were perplexed. A man who at the time of the interview was serving in the Afrika Korps could not understand what had happened to

Rommel. Possibly, he said, Rommel's illness and complete ignorance of politics might explain how Goebbels had succeeded in persuading him to make such statements.

Sommerfeldt had apparently been instructed to emphasize the cowardice of the British. On one occasion he indulged in a lecture to the effect that the British soldier was the meanest coward the Germans had met on the battlefield. The reaction of the audience was the same as to the Rommel interview. A week later an incident occurred which fell like a thunderbolt on the Ministry of Propaganda.

The Ministry had announced that one of the men who had participated in the conquest of Crete, a captain and holder of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, called von der Heydte, was going to talk about parachute-troop experiences. He came straight from the aeroplane and had obviously had no time for receiving any instructions. What he said about parachute troops is immaterial in this connexion. The main thing was that he, before the blushing Sommerfeldt and the amused foreign Press, praised the British soldier in manly words. "Tommies," he said, "are the toughest and bravest enemies we Germans have met. The British stormed forward against the positions of my company seventeen times. The eighteenth time we should have had to give in. Ammunition had run out. But they did not come back. . . ."

He gave several other examples of the bravery of the British. They made an overwhelming impression on all the propaganda officials. Here was a man who knew what he was talking about, who had smelt powder, and received his Knight's Cross from the hand of the commanding general after the conquest of Canea. The blunder was talked about for weeks.

The Germans know remarkably little of what has taken place in Britain during this war. The British appear to be so much better informed about the situation in Germany. All Germany is riddled with Secret Service agents, partly those who have been there the whole time, partly a great number who have been brought there by degrees. They were smuggled to employment in factories throughout Germany—the shortage of labour forbade more thorough examination of the personal relations of the workers imported.

British, Alsatians, German émigrés, and Jews have been employed as agents. They were perfectly equipped—I was told by Germans that captured British parachute agents had been in



possession of a complete and correct set of credentials, military passes, leave passes, ration cards, etc. If they were discovered it was often by chance.

An acquaintance of mine told me the following personal experience. A lieutenant, a sergeant-major, and two privates were travelling on the Underground. A young girl came in. As the carriage lurched she happened to tread hard on the sergeant-major's feet. He broke out in insults. The officer thought he was going too far and said, "What do you think you're doing? Let me have your name and regiment." Perhaps the sergeant-major's nerves were overstrained—anyway, he began to stammer. Finally he produced his papers, which appeared to be in complete order. But something must have clicked in the officer's mind; suddenly he ordered the two privates to arrest the sergeant-major. If the latter had then behaved in a normal way everything might have gone well. But at the next station he made a desperate attempt to escape and was on the point of succeeding when somebody tripped him up. My friend had by then become interested and alighted with the others. The lieutenant searched the N.C.O. as he stood. To the amazement of those around he then discovered maps and photographs which told everything.

The bombardment of Stettin in the spring of 1943 was but one example of efficient British Secret Service work. A trustworthy informant told me that the British were, from the Nazi point of view, frighteningly well informed about what was going on in German aircraft factories. British bombers often paid visits immediately before a number of planes were to be delivered. Another source had witnessed the following event. In one of the biggest German factories 180 planes were ready for delivery and taken over by a high Air Force officer. The pilots were on leave in the nearest town, and the planes were scheduled to be flown off on the following morning. But towards nightfall the officer began to have evil presentiments. Suddenly he decided to summon the whole personnel. When all had been collected he gave, in spite of the late hour, orders to take off immediately to different airfields in the vicinity. A few hours later the hangars were smashed by heavy bombs.

The British information service has spun the whole of Germany in its net. Perhaps, when the war is over, we shall hear of high Nazi officials who have for years been working for the British Secret Service.

The Nazi attitude towards America resembles their view on Britain. All Germans are very sensitive with regard to the United States. Most Germans have instinctive sympathy for the country—not least because of the millions of German émigrés there. On the other hand, everybody remembers America's achievements in the last war during 1917-18. The respect for her material strength is therefore widely spread.

Nazi propaganda has, of course, intervened with a view to 'correcting' opinion. For several years the method of belittling America's strength was employed. Berlin was ironical about the American "craze for figures," maintaining that the Liberty system was a complete failure, and that the American war production was far from reaching the targets laid down by Roosevelt. The Nazis also did everything in their power to discredit America in other respects. But this propaganda, which reached its peak in 1942, apparently did not succeed in convincing the German people that the United States were weak and morally rotten.

Both the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda, however, continued their campaign against America. Schmidt made the representatives of the foreign Press in Berlin listen daily to endless elaborations of the subject. As soon as he touched on Roosevelt he almost frothed at the mouth.

But Schmidt came in for a painful incident which was talked of for months in international circles in Berlin. One day—I think it was early in the autumn of 1942—he had obtained no less a lecturer at his *Stammtisch* than Thomsen, Germany's Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, who had just been repatriated and was later appointed German Minister in Stockholm. Thomsen gave, to the amazement of those present, a lecture which on every single point disproved the opinion about America which Schmidt had daily poured out at the conference table in Wilhelmstrasse. The dumbfounded host made vain efforts to twist things in his favour—Thomsen either did not understand or did not want to understand what Schmidt expected from him. Schmidt asked the lecturer if it was not after all correct to say that the American people were beginning to find out that they had been foxed by Roosevelt. Thomsen replied that the American President was without doubt a great statesman who had the whole nation behind him. "We should have no illusions about that," he continued, "and now that the American people have entered

the war they are going to fight until it is finished." One of Schmidt's people then asked if the whole policy of the U.S.A. were not decided by the Jews. Thomsen replied that there was a difference between Jews and Jews in America; between the rich Jews, who were Americanized and thought and felt like Americans, and the poor Jewish proletarians there was a wide gap, he said. The veins on Schmidt's forehead swelled, but all his and others' attempts to save his line of propaganda were promptly refuted by Thomsen. To crown the whole thing Thomsen delivered a grave warning against underestimation of the American mobilization.

Schmidt was furious, and it would certainly have been interesting to overhear the words bandied between the two after the lecture. Its effect was such that several weeks passed before America was taken up again at the Press conferences, and then quite a different note was struck.

Other reasons contributed to rendering the old propaganda line untenable. The results of the American participation in the war were becoming too apparent to the German people. Goebbels and von Ribbentrop then embarked on another policy, trying to maintain that the British and Americans would not be able to achieve a decision against "the Fortress of Europe." It was, therefore, for Germany and her confederates to hold out until the Allies realized that it was meaningless to continue the struggle.

America became the big nightmare of the Nazis. Gradually they turned to talking about the United States as little as possible. Considerably less was heard during the spring of 1943 of the popular theory that America was about to 'take over' the British Empire, and that there were serious ruptures between London and Washington.

## VIII

### WINTER 1942-43

#### *Stalingrad*

A GERMAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE HAD BEEN PREDICTED IN THE EAST after the pause in the middle of December; instead the Russians once again took the initiative, directing a violent thrust against the German lines at the Middle Don. On December 21 the spokesman of the German High Command was compelled to admit that the Russians had made a wedge fifty miles deep and forty miles broad in the German positions. The gap was of the same character as a leakage in a ship with watertight compartments, said Major Sommerfeldt. But in spite of this and other soothing pronouncements from various people in the Ministry of Propaganda, it was absolutely clear that the situation had at once become extremely serious. The bad weather paralysed activity in the air, and the enormous amount of material on the Russian side could be flung forward almost undisturbed against the considerably inferior German forces.

On December 27 it was announced that the Germans and their allies had launched a counter-offensive which during the following days was reported to have gained ground. But one or two days later Sommerfeldt declared that no important change had taken place. At the beginning of January 1943 the temperature fell to 30 degrees centigrade below zero in the battle zone. Fighting went on, however, with undiminished fury. The Russians proved themselves familiar with the terrain and exploited the snowstorms for bringing up their tanks into attacking-positions. The infantry groups moved fast on their snow-boots.

Round the New Year anxiety for Stalingrad grew rapidly in Germany. The German offensive south-west of the city ended in complete failure, and the big Russian successes made most people suspect that General Paulus had been virtually cut off. This had probably actually happened before the New Year.

The effects of the Russian successes began to show in the South too. Through their advance across the Don southward the Russians were directly threatening the communication lines of the German

Caucasus army. During the first days of January the Germans began quietly to withdraw on the southern front. The only retreat thus far admitted was the evacuation of Elista. But since this place was the one important German garrison town on the desolate Kalmuck steppe, its evacuation was evidence that a general German retreat westward had started, and that Stalingrad would be abandoned to its fate.

A primary condition for the success of a retreat was that the German troops in the Don sector should be able to stem the Russian advance from the North so that the hinge at Rostov would remain in German hands. The Germans succeeded in this, but the general outcome was that they had been compelled to withdraw southward and westward, that the Stalingrad troops were cut off, and that the retreat in the Caucasus was proceeding in such circumstances that nobody could yet say for certain whether the German troops there would manage to extricate themselves from the Russian grip.

By the middle of January it was evident that Hitler had once again underestimated the strength of the Russians, that the Russians could exploit the terrain to an extent which nobody had anticipated, and that the weather was still Stalin's principal ally. The Russians had also proved capable of successfully adapting the tank tactics which they had learned straight from the Germans.

Towards the end of January attention was more and more concentrated on the hopeless fight which General Paulus and his troops were carrying on at Stalingrad. The Russians, having pressed the German lines so far back that the encircled army had to give up every hope of relief, then started a systematic siege of the Stalingrad group. Its only connexion with the outside world was the transport planes that could still land on the steadily dwindling area the defenders had at their disposal. According to German opinion, the Russians threw in thirty divisions at the end of the month in order to break down Paulus. The defenders were forced back to the city inch by inch and then from block to block. The Russians captured one house after another in savage hand-to-hand fighting. The Germans fought desperately and would certainly have been able to hold out longer, had they not run short of arms, ammunition, and other material. No aircraft could land during the latter part of the month, and the only way to get supplies through was to drop them in

sacks and parcels. These fell as often as not into the hands of the Russians, but every hundred rounds of cartridges and every loaf of bread were, of course, invaluable.

The strong German forces gradually melted. Berlin maintained that the Russian losses were many times as big as the German and that Paulus's stand had therefore 'paid.' But there were also observers who pointed out that the Russian material was superior to the German material at Stalingrad, and that the heavy Russian weapons were bound to have greater effect among the defenders than the latter's relatively light arms could have on the attackers, who were, moreover, spread out over a larger area.

All over Germany both well-informed and ignorant people were discussing whether it had been necessary to let the Paulus group remain at Stalingrad. Good informants reported that Paulus himself, von Manstein, and even Keitel and the new Chief of the General Staff, Zeitzler, had opposed the idea, but that Hitler in a fit of rage had ordered Paulus to hold out to the last man and to make sure that he himself did not fall into the hands of the enemy. Early in January Paulus had gone by air to Hitler's headquarters and offered to bring home the encircled army with 50 per cent. losses—but in vain.

In all fairness it must be stated that many Germans on the other hand considered it indispensable to sacrifice the Sixth Army in order to secure the retreat of the Caucasus troops after the situation had developed as it did at the beginning of January. Others retorted that Paulus's army would have been able to do more for the Caucasus troops if it had been kept intact and employed somewhere else than at Stalingrad with the same access to supplies as the other German armies.

At the end of January the Sixth Army's fight was drawing to its close. On the 26th Sommerfeldt stated that the Germans at Stalingrad were fighting with no hope of getting away alive. On the following day the remnants of Paulus's group were reported still to be holding out among the ruins in a hell of iron and blood. The Russians were apparently speeding up the last act in order to announce the conquest of the city on January 30, the tenth anniversary of Hitler's assumption of power. But mobilizing their final resources, some minor German groups succeeded in making a stand until February 2, when the cease-fire was sounded. Paulus and eight

other generals had been taken prisoner on the 31st. It was affirmed that Hitler, who had appointed Paulus a Field-Marshal immediately before the fall of Stalingrad, had another fit of rage when he learnt that his new Marshal had fallen into Russian hands.

The Russians reported a total of 91,000 prisoners from January 10 to February 2. They estimated the original strength of the combined German and Rumanian troops as 331,000. Well-informed German sources put the figure at 300,000 men for all the forces, including non-combatants.

The losses in men were probably surpassed in importance for the Germans by the loss of 60,000 lorries destroyed or captured by the Russians in the Stalingrad sector from November 19 until the fall of the city. The total German losses in lorries on the Eastern front during this time have been given as 120,000. To this were added 7000 tanks and 5000 aircraft, transport planes included.

It will be for history to decide how and why the defeat occurred. Nobody can contest that the German fighting at Stalingrad was heroic. But the effects of the defeat were of both military and political nature and reached deep into Germany.

The Russian gains were in spite of all German efforts not confined to Stalingrad and its vicinity. The greater part of the conquests in the Caucasus during the summer, which had caused such joy in Berlin, had to be abandoned, and the German troops there withdrew across the Don with the exception of a small force which was ordered to hold the bridgehead at the Taman peninsula to secure the Kerch strait and with that the Crimea. Incidentally, the successful carrying out of this task should be considered one of the most remarkable achievements of the German Army during this war.

But the Russian drive yielded more gains than Stalingrad and the Caucasus. In the face of Russian pressure the Germans were also compelled to evacuate the major part of the Donetz basin. On February 14 both Voroshilovgrad and Kharkov fell. Well-informed people in Berlin admitted that the situation had suddenly become very dangerous since the Russians were throwing in all available forces in a drive on the Dnieper. Nothing appeared to be able to stop them. The Third Russian Tank Army under General Popov was approaching Dniepropetrovsk. Before the danger had reached its climax Hitler had obviously had a complete breakdown, and the rudder was taken over by one of Germany's most prominent officers,

Field-Marshal von Manstein. As right-hand man he was given Colonel-General Halder, who, in the new situation, offered his services once again. (The two seem to have ruled almost unchallenged until the middle of March, when Hitler was said to have resumed the leadership.) The effect of a competent command very soon showed itself. On February 20 a series of German counter-thrusts was started which immediately turned the scales. The Russians were slowly pressed back, and the German position farthest south was stabilized at the river Mius. Simultaneously the advanced German bridgehead at Rjev and Vyazma, which had for a long time been a costly position, the supplying of which had involved great difficulties, was evacuated. All buildings, roads, bridges, and railways in the area were destroyed and the population carried off with the retreating German troops. This gave the Germans a considerably more favourable front line, although the threat from the Russian forces round Kharkov still remained dangerous. This threat, however, was eliminated through a swift action by von Manstein, and on March 12 Kharkov was retaken by the Germans. The whole position had thus been turned into a German advantage in a way scarcely anticipated at the beginning of February. One might even, with the military writer Ritter von Schramm, speak of a "miracle at the Donetz."

When the Germans found that the Russians were attacking with much larger forces than had been expected a round-up of the last man-power reserves was carried out. In charge of this task was General von Unruh, who was given practically dictatorial powers to pick men for the front. He crossed the country in all directions, at express speed, in a special train. Wherever he arrived the authorities were to be entirely at his disposal, and he spared nobody. Both State authorities and the Party organizations had to give up their people, and almost no appeal existed against von Unruh. Neither did he let himself be fooled by the most imposing lists of essential war work with which the Party officials presented him. They were sent away wholesale and could not protest. A veritable 'von Unruh panic' arose. He would turn up suddenly in the middle of the night. To warn Party comrades about his travelling-route was an offence against military security and as such high treason. The name of von Unruh's aide-de-camp was reported to be von Wirbel. (Unruh



means unrest, and Wirbel means whirl.) And certainly both the General's and his staff's behaviour resembled a cyclone.

The General not only had power to call up people so far spared for various reasons. He also succeeded in sending complete garrisons to the front, replacing them by old time-expired reservists. Women were taking the men's jobs in great numbers in barracks and police offices.

The most different opinions were voiced about von Unruh's activities. Leading Nazis maintained that he succeeded in scraping together nothing less than two and a half million men. The figure was probably a great deal smaller. Experts mentioned figures between one and one and a half millions. Even so the achievement was remarkable.

But, of course, the quality was not equal to the quantity. The Party and other favoured circles certainly produced some model examples of physical fitness, but the great majority were physically defective, people lacking one or two fingers, suffering from heart trouble, and so forth. During the training a relatively high percentage of invaliding out occurred, in spite of the efforts of the military doctors. Even after the worse wrecks had been turned away, the general standard was below the average. Officers with the disagreeable task of making soldiers out of this man-power scrap in three months' time (after that period those who had had no previous military training were usually sent to France to do garrison duty and simultaneously have their training completed) complained bitterly about the physical weakness of the recruits. Even the mental attitude of these people who had until now succeeded in keeping clear, but who now in the final phase of the war were called up, left much to be desired.

Alongside with the call-up of older classes a hurried training of the youngest classes went on. When the fifteens and the sixteens of the Hitlerjugend were summoned to the anti-aircraft guns a storm swept over the country. After the first of them had been killed in action in Berlin distress and exasperation were expressed everywhere. "This is the end when the children are shot as soldiers," it was said. The Waffen-S.S. and the Wehrmacht were competing for those younger classes designed for military duty. The former had the upper hand at the beginning of 1943. They had, with Hitler's consent, started a campaign for 'voluntary' recruiting in all schools

and labour camps. It was carried out in such a way that it demanded great moral courage from the members of the Hitlerjugend to refuse and go to the Wehrmacht instead. The latter is said to have received no more than 30 per cent. out of the 1925 and 1926 classes while the S.S. took the rest. To this was added an attempt by Göring to organize an army of his own, obviously, however, with little success.

### *The Home Front and the Military Setbacks*

Towards the end of 1942 a tendency towards self-examination could be discovered among the German people. In family and other intimate circles the landing in North Africa, the Russian offensive, etc., were vividly discussed. But the worst anxiety was perhaps caused by the isolation of the German nation. By this time it was becoming clearer and clearer to all sensible Germans how alone they stood as a nation.

It was in the nature of things that a moral crisis should follow the changed situation. Above all, the confidence in the leadership was undermined. But even apart from that, the German people were evidently shaken to their foundations. Since the beginning of 1943 fear of the consequences of defeat was the dominating incentive to the continuation of the struggle.

The signs of the changes in public feeling were abundant. Even little-informed people began to ponder the question of what they would do personally in the event of a collapse. But how a collapse would develop nobody seemed able to visualize. Minor preparations were nevertheless made. The chances for evacuating the family to relatives in some quiet corner of the country were examined. Another sign was a rapidly growing disgust at official victory proclamations and public manifestations of the regime as a whole. As soon as a German felt that he could rely on everybody present he cast away all inhibitions and began to talk about the *Teppichfresser* ("the carper-eater"). It was a common notion that Hitler during his nervous outbreaks was hard on carpets and curtains.

The police were compelled to take drastic measures to prevent the regime from being exposed to open criticism. Surveillance was tightened up. Some astonishment was caused among foreigners in Berlin when in December quite a few letters from abroad arrived without a censorship stamp. The background turned out to be a

large-scale espionage affair within the censorship, which had so far been answerable to the High Command. Some thirteen people were executed, and the military censorship was abolished. A new censorship was organized under the Gestapo, to some extent with the dismissed personnel. Simultaneously a number of Jews were executed, alleged to have divulged important figures and production secrets with the assistance of a gang of saboteurs in the military censorship.

Private discussion about the regime and its failure was, of course, not reflected in the Press, except perhaps in that the usual tributes to the Great Strategist were no longer forthcoming. Some sensation was caused by *Das Schwarze Korps* which, in an article in December, left it for history to decide if the German High Command had been taken by surprise by the action in North Africa or not—which was as close to an admission that that was the fact as could possibly be expected from a S.S. paper.

Public feeling was not encouraged by the discovery of increasing effects of the purely physical overstrain of the nation. People were simply worn out. This was partly due to the previous cutting of the food rations, the results of which began to show only six months later. Production managers reported growing difficulties with the workers. There were daily instances of workers collapsing at their machines. When the factory doctor examined them it turned out to be 'the same old trouble.' They were sent home to sleep and were perhaps given some extra food (which the factory management had collected on the black market for this purpose) and a vitamin injection. After that they could carry on again for a while. It was remarkable that public health was not worse than it was. Medical experts estimated the public resistance to infections as extremely low. But no large-scale epidemics broke out.

A bright spot was Göring's extra rations for the people. Backe had (after much contriving, it was said) managed to produce an additional ration of 250 grammes of meat, 125 grammes of fat, 62.5 grammes of cheese, 50 grammes of coffee, half a kilogramme of wheat flour, and 125 grammes of boiled sweets. The latter were almost inedible this Christmas. The extra rations were, of course, not distributed to the many millions of foreign workers. Nor did they get the additional rations for heavy work which German workers received. No extra provisions were given to the stateless.

The Christmas season in the German capital was stamped by a marked severity. All places of entertainment were full of passing visitors, officers, etc., but the Berliners who could, stayed at home to sleep for a day or two—longer leave was as a rule not given this time.

The New Year was about the same as Christmas. But while at Christmas-time most propaganda had been conspicuous by its absence, the Germans were practically drowned in proclamations at the New Year. Almost every chief issued his own. The contents were usually stereotyped. Göring said all Germans were hoping that 1943 would be "the year of victory and peace." Hitler declared in his order of the day to the Wehrmacht that Churchill and Roosevelt had taught Germany to hate. Gauleiter Grohé told the population of Cologne that every German, man, woman and child, knew that Germany *must* win "since failing that she would not be allowed to live."

In January Dr Goebbels gave the keynote for the new propaganda designed to counter the situation arising from the invasion of Africa and the setbacks in the East. It had taken him a considerable time to find his line. Mistrust of both himself and the whole propaganda business had grown. To scorn it was certain to win every soldier's hearty approval. They were weary of listening to Hans Fritzsche and his like as soon as they switched on the radio, and they repeatedly voiced their discontent.

Goebbels' new line had been foreboded in the December issue of *Das Schwarze Korps* when this excellent barometer of German propaganda problems pointed out that the last 'reserves' must fall if the German people really wanted to win the war. "In spite of all," it ran, "we still have one foot planted in the realm of peace."

Those who had seen the hunt for trash before Christmas and the queues at the booking-offices realized that. "In a total war there is only total victory. This war is not going to finish up as a shooting contest. It is waged for our lives. We cannot win it 50 per cent., not even 75 per cent., but only 100 per cent."

The gist of Dr Goebbels' article in *Das Reich* of mid-January, which introduced the new slogans, was that a total mobilization must be achieved. "The issue is everything or nothing," said Goebbels. "And there must be no question of preserving as much as possible of peace-time conditions for the individual. The work on the home

front must be 'total,' and the fighting at the front must be 'total.'"

The mobilization campaign was fully launched towards the end of January. 'The *Völkischer Beobachter* wrote that those at home had until now considered it their right even to idle in their spare time or devote it to sports, radio, bars, theatres, and cinemas. "But now," the paper continued, "we see at Stalingrad, in North Africa, and in the British air raids on the Rhineland and Northern Italy evidence of the mounting enemy effort to give the world conflagration another direction. Before we get burnt by it let us throw some comfort overboard!" Finally the paper even stressed the example of the British women's achievements in the war effort of their country. Another German paper commended measures of violence against "the shirkers."

Gradually it transpired that the mobilization would bring a definite end to all luxury—not among the leaders, of course, but among the people—and that the closing down of unnecessary enterprises would save man-power, gas, electricity, and materials. The action was a parallel to the rationalization campaign started at the beginning of 1942 in order to replenish the supplies after the winter losses and to neutralize the defeats in propaganda.

The campaign was expected to be announced on January 30, 1943, the tenth anniversary of Hitler's assumption of power. It was taken for granted that the Führer would then deliver a big oration. There was every indication that originally this had been intended. But in the days immediately before the 30th a marked perplexity reigned in Berlin. Finally, it was decided that Hitler would *not* speak. The Adlon Hotel, which had been requisitioned, suddenly had all its rooms released. Sleeping-coaches to and from Berlin looked as though they would travel empty, but were filled at the last moment with the agreeably surprised people who were next on the booking lists. A celebration to which Brauweiler had invited us foreign journalists "on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the assumption of power" was cancelled "for technical reasons." The whole programme had obviously been simplified.

On the 29th feverish activity was going on in the Ministry of Propaganda. Hitler was reported to have given Goebbels practically unlimited powers to bring into effect the total mobilization. Many

disbelieved this as the little Doctor had so far not displayed any talents which would qualify him for this particular task.

It was then with far more than usual expectation that the representatives of the foreign Press looked forward to hearing Goebbels. The agitation was further increased by a special circumstance. Suddenly at 11 A.M. the new air-raid warning, 'the first alert,' was given (indicating the possibility of single raiders over Berlin, bombs and anti-aircraft fire, but allowing traffic to continue and the population to stay away from the shelters). The British are punctual, said the Berliners, for Göring's speech to the Wehrmacht was scheduled for 11 A.M. but had to be postponed because of the raid. For a full hour the radio played music while the announcer interpolated from time to time: "The speech of the Reichsmarschall has been postponed for a further few minutes." At the Press conference in the Ministry of Propaganda it was suddenly announced that tickets for Goebbels' speech were to be called for at 3 P.M. instead of 4 P.M. Goebbels intended to escape the British by speaking one hour earlier than announced.

Goebbels arrived at the Sport Palast half an hour late, at 3.30, dressed in a leather coat of the type he had worn in the years of the struggle for power. The public was the same as usual, including the messengers from various ministries and the girls in the Ministry of Propaganda. But the atmosphere was heavy. Stalingrad threw its mighty shadow over the assembly.

The speech was a big disappointment. It brought nothing substantially new, only the same well-chewed phrases. The motto was total mobilization, but nothing was heard of the special measures which the audience had been waiting for.

The public looked bewildered. The cheers came—judged by Sport Palast standards—hesitantly and without conviction, and, more important still, the interpolations from the audience which usually functioned like clockwork were badly organized and at times of a very dubious character. It was the first occasion during my two years in Berlin that anything similar had happened. When Goebbels said that from now on the German people must throw in everything for victory and show themselves worthy of the soldiers at the front a powerful voice shouted: "It is high time!" None of those present could doubt what that meant. A murmur rippled through the Sport Palast, and Goebbels checked himself for a moment. On one or two

other occasions the interpolations were sounded like sheer sabotage. "Out with the Jews" was bellowed in the wrong place and caused general merriment.

The speech was performed at break-neck speed. The reason was no secret to us foreigners. The prospect of an air attack on the Sport Palast was indeed not particularly pleasant. After half an hour a little Party scout came up to Goebbels with a slip of paper. Goebbels looked at it for a second and then went on unperturbed. But gradually his voice grew into a hurricane, and, sure enough, a few minutes later it became noisy outside. No sirens were heard—Goebbels had been prudent enough to have them disconnected in the surrounding area. In addition, the *claqueurs* started applauding when the thunder outside increased.

Only a few of the listeners understood that there was an air raid and anti-aircraft fire. Several had perhaps expected it, but the disconnected sirens did the trick—afterwards it turned out that everybody had been waiting for the alert and had, therefore, not interpreted the noise as gunfire and bombs.

The latter part of Goebbels' speech was delivered at a furious speed. After a tame finish Goebbels read out a proclamation from Hitler, beginning as usual with Adam and Eve and of such content that not even the most fanatical National Socialist could find anything new. Towards the end of the proclamation the Party scout returned with another slip of paper, whereafter Goebbels noticeably slowed down the tempo. Himmler appeared to draw a sigh of relief and mopped his forehead.

Perhaps Goebbels thought the Hitler proclamation meagre, or perhaps the impertinence of the British had compelled him to shorten his own peroration. Anyway, when the danger had passed, the astounded public found themselves listening to another Goebbels speech. The new one was not much better than the old, but rather a repetition, and the Minister of Propaganda was obviously in difficulties about an effective climax. At last came the sentence: "Führer, command—we follow you!"

The meeting produced a mixed impression. The gospel preached was perhaps the poorest in spirit ever offered at a public meeting of this rank during the last two years. The grip on the faithful audience—and, apart from the journalists, only the faithful were admitted to such meetings—was apparently slackening. We had a definite

feeling that the time of the big jubilee meetings was past, and that it might have been the last public gathering for a long time. One question above all was asked—why did Hitler not come himself? What had happened to him? The German people should, in face of the threatening Stalingrad catastrophe, have had a few words from their Leader.

Later on it turned out that Goebbels had succeeded in his trick with the time-table. The relaying of the speech over the radio from the Sport Palast was started, as announced, at four o'clock sharp.

In spite of his poor speech Goebbels was the man of the day. The Ministry of Propaganda rejoiced at the important position their chief had acquired and at the possibilities for squashing the previously mightier Foreign Office. In the latter the change made itself felt immediately. One of the first 'simplifying measures' Goebbels had devised was the closing down of the Foreign Office Press Club in Fasanenstrasse. For two hours Schmidt implored Goebbels to save the club, where Schmidt himself had an apartment which was his operational base *par excellence*; but Goebbels was inexorable. It was only after Schmidt had mobilized the foreign Press attachés that he succeeded in persuading the Minister of Propaganda to cancel his decision.

The big shop-closing move soon became a reality. In Berlin a number of the best-known luxury restaurants were barred and bolted, among others Horcher's, the Taverne, and Zum Alten Schweden. Most antique, jewellery, and furniture businesses had to close down, also the perfume shops, beauty salons, and fashion houses. In addition it was announced that many newspapers and periodicals would cease to appear. A violent tug-of-war about individual restaurants went on behind the scenes. Gossip spoke of Goebbels as having arranged for the stoning of certain luxury restaurants in which influential Party members were financially interested, in order to be able to refer to public opinion in support of their closing down. Göring was said to have succeeded, after a terrific fight, in saving one of them for his officers.

The German people responded sullenly to the closing down of shops. The measure struck in particular the middle classes, and in spite of many assurances from the authorities that compensation would be given after the war, there were many who suspected that



the action had been started not so much for the sake of war expediency as partly for the confiscation of still-existing stocks of commodities, partly for the personal benefit of the Party bosses. That the latter batted on them as much as they could was at any rate generally assumed.

The days after the Sport Palast meeting lay under the cloud of Stalingrad. No propaganda was needed to produce a national mourning for the catastrophe. Deep gloom reigned over every home—deepest, of course, in areas which knew that their own regiments had been with the Sixth Army. Vienna, which had had a whole division engaged at Stalingrad, displayed moving signs of desperation. The streets and tram-cars were crowded with faces distorted with anxiety or numbed with sorrow.

The sorrow was mingled with exasperation—hardly anyone was resigned to see in Stalingrad the incalculable hand of Nature. The vast majority saw simply the result of bad leadership, and everybody knew who was guilty.

Stories about Hitler's state of health piled up. Reliable sources reported at the beginning of February that he was completely isolated and watched over by Bormann, the chief of the Party Chancellery. A well-known German figure, who had to visit the Führer in the course of his duties, was said to have been instructed not to give any reply if Hitler asked for information about the situation. That he no longer exercised the military leadership was even testified by officials.

The announcement that all Reichsleiter and Gauleiter had visited the Führer in his headquarters and received from him expressions of his firm determination and unshakable will to victory therefore looked like a denial designed to conceal a fact. The *Völkischer Beobachter* called it "a political demonstration of the most far-reaching significance," but a glance at the pictures published of the fat and bloated Party bosses made one doubt the propaganda effect of the whole arrangement. (The 'Court Photographer' Hoffmann, in his anxiety to get his son-in-law, Baldur von Schirach, into the pictures, had made the mistake of letting the fattest specimens dominate them.) And from the inner circles of the Party rumours filtered out which did not indicate a particularly confident atmosphere. Hitler was reported to have said that the summer of 1943 would show whether he had been "the greatest eccentric of all time."

During February morale dropped lower than it had probably ever done since the beginning of the war. Goebbels managed to bring about some improvement by very cleverly taking the lead in the discussion about Stalingrad, building up the theory of a tragic Leonidas fight—a sacrifice for the Fatherland greater than anything in the history of Germany. The heroism of Stalingrad entails an obligation—that was the line of the Minister of Propaganda. Whenever opposition and criticism were voiced the reply came promptly: "Remember Stalingrad!"

The feelings of the people, even though propaganda succeeded to a certain extent, assumed direct political expression. New police raids and arrests became necessary—in Siemensstadt alone, the big factory suburb outside Berlin, six hundred persons were arrested. A purge in the Foreign Office resulted in the arrest of the powerful Staatssekretär Luther and his right-hand man, Legationsrat von Büttner—officially for having exploited their positions by jobbing in real estate.

Strange reports arrived from the provinces, above all from Munich. At the end of January Adolf Wagner had summoned a gathering of the highest Party bosses in the Bavarian capital together with representatives of the armed forces and other State authorities. He was reported to have said in his lecture: "If we win this war then it is the Party which has won it. If we lose it it is the armed forces who have lost it." An officer holding the "Ritterkreuz"—the Knight's Cross—is then said to have gone up to him and boxed him on the ear, with the result that Wagner collapsed with a dislocated jaw.

There were also riots and students' demonstrations in Munich when the deputy Gauleiter gave the men and girl students a lecture in which he accused them of studying only in order to escape essential war work. Some got up and left the hall. After a second's pause all the students followed suit, leaving the discomfited Nazi leader alone in the hall. Some bold students even published a proclamation against Nazism. A raid and several death-sentences followed.

Goebbels certainly felt that his appearance on January 30 had not been much of a success, and that the German people needed a stronger injection to get through the winter. On February 18 he made a surprise appearance before a hastily summoned and yet

carefully selected gathering in Berlin with a speech which may be ranked among the more remarkable ones of this war. It was thoroughly revolutionary and delivered in a pathetic, trembling voice. Those present—personally I heard it over the radio in Vienna—asserted that Goebbels had never before displayed such mastery over an audience. The reception was almost hysterical.

The speech was consistently characterized by class-struggle slogans and appeals to the lowest human instincts. One more speech like this, and the Communist programme is proclaimed, many said afterwards. It was not without significance that the Ministry of Propaganda reminded the foreign correspondents how Goebbels had always belonged to the left wing of the Party, always been a socialist at heart, etc. Had the National Socialist Party decided to stake everything on 'social revolution'?

Goebbels ended up by proposing a sort of plebiscite among those present, maintaining that the gathering was representative of the German people. He hurled out nine questions which were all to be replied to by a resounding yes and one which should have been replied to by a no, but which in the hurry also got a thunderous, thousand-voiced yes and had to be reformulated.

Many remarkable things were said at this meeting. Thoughts were already turned in a special direction by Goebbels' statement that Germany had so far been trying to wage the war "with her left hand." The sharp anti-Semitic tendency foreboded another action against the Jews. "Hang the Jews!" was a frequent interpolation. The most interesting was, perhaps, "The Party must have absolute power!"

As mass suggestion the speech was a clever achievement. But after its immediate effects had evaporated the German public began to reflect on its strained tone and acidity and ask themselves if a catastrophe was threatening in the East.

A neutral observer also noticed other points—for example, the urgent appeal to the women to report for war work. Germany was behind Britain as far as women's war effort was concerned. One thing was conspicuous—whereas queens and princesses had served as nurses in wars and had taken their calling seriously, nothing like that was heard of Frau Göring, Frau Goebbels, or Frau von Ribbentrop.

Goebbels' new speech also revived the question about Hitler.

Where is he? the German public was asking. Rumours flourished and became more insistent when on February 24, the twenty-third anniversary of the foundation of the Party, Staatssekretar Esser was sent forward to read out a proclamation from Hitler, who was said to be prevented from attending.

The atmosphere eased somewhat after the German generals had succeeded in stabilizing the situation in the East and even delivered counter-attacks. Yet many Germans who had believed in National Socialism up to January 1943 felt shaken by events. And the relative improvement lasted only until the increased Allied air war got under way.

### *Winter Operations—Military and Diplomatic*

In January 1943 the Eighth Army advanced in Libya from El Agheila, and Rommel was forced to continue his retreat in the direction of Tripolitania. In Tunisia the situation was during the course of the month stabilized to the advantage of the Axis. In the middle of February the Germans were even able to start a swift thrust towards the American positions in Southern Tunisia. The attack struck the Allied troops, occupied in reinforcing and offensive preparations, and therefore had considerable success. Gafsa was taken by the German-Italian troops.

The submarine war went on with growing intensity. At the end of January Admiral Raeder was dismissed and replaced by Admiral Doenitz—"the Lion," as his subordinates called him. This was interpreted as an indication that Germany intended to throw her main weight into the submarine operations. There might also have been another factor in the background. It was maintained—though I have not been able to check it—that an organized opposition had been attempted in the Navy, and that Raeder had not intervened with sufficient vigour. Eighty naval officers were reported to have been executed.

However that may be, the Doenitz tactics were apparently successful. The figures of sinking rose considerably above those for the corresponding period in 1942.

The German official figures for enemy tonnage losses offer in themselves interesting problems which may be left to the experts. Foreign observers in Germany had for several years suspected the

same sort of exaggeration as in the figures of prisoners in the East. The average tonnage of the ships sunk was too high. But apart from that the German leaders had certainly no scruples against 'cooking' the figures.

Far more intensive than the military operations was the diplomatic tug-of-war between the Allies and Germany. At the end of January it was understood in Berlin that a meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt was imminent. Schmidt satirized the British Premier for having gone to Washington to listen to "His Master's Voice" and receive his orders. Germany's official commentator did not lose countenance when it transpired that the Allied statesmen had met in Casablanca and not in Washington. Had not the German Intelligence quite rightly predicted that they would meet in the 'White House'—Casa Blanca?

It was, of course, recognized in the Wilhelmstrasse that the Allies had at the meeting outlined the programme for their continued offensive. But Goebbels concentrated on a tender spot—the fact that Stalin had not been present.

Immediately after Casablanca the Germans had a painful surprise—Churchill's visit to Turkey. Attention was once more centred on that country. The possibility of an Allied action in the Balkans had to be reckoned with. Churchill's negotiations in Adana were a gesture which went home in Berlin.

The Germans certainly did not believe that Turkey was about to intervene actively in the war. The visit was rather interpreted as designed to inform the Turks about the future conduct of the war and possibly to give them guarantees against Russia. It should be remembered that the situation on the Eastern front was at that time extremely serious. Leading Nazi circles fully realized that Turkey was definitely lost to Germany and that Turkish reaction to a British request for passage through their country, for example, was above all a tactical question.

After the Adana meeting the German Ambassador, von Papen, gave a very pessimistic report in Berlin. The situation looked much like Nemesis. The British, he said, were daily infiltrating more and more into Turkey. Large quantities of British arms arrived and were stored in depots guarded by British military personnel. Material intended exclusively for the Turks was supervised by British 'instructors.' Roads were built for transport purposes, road signs

in English were erected, and railway construction was speeded up under the direction of Allied technicians. Well-staffed British and American commissions were installed in Ankara and Istanbul. Many airfields were constructed. For whom? There was scarcely a modern Turkish military plane per airfield.

To their extreme annoyance the Nazi leaders were also forced to recognize that the Adana conference represented a powerful political advance for *Britain* in the Near East. Party circles had consoled themselves with the observation that if Germany was on the decline this was even more true of Britain, who was forced to give up one position after another to America. But now everything indicated that Britain and Churchill, at least for the time being, were winning the tricks. Russia was so far out of the picture. Her Ambassador was reported to have inquired in Ankara what the enormous British deliveries of material signified. The only reply was that they were intended for the Turkish Army. American influence in Turkey had decreased. Ankara feared that the Americans were considering the possibility of ceding the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to the Russians. Further the Turks suspected that the Americans were out for the Dodecanese Islands and along with that for a permanent position in the Mediterranean. A conflict about the Baghdad line did not improve relations. The British were sailing with a fair wind not only in Turkish waters. Growing British influence was reported from the Arab world, above all from Saudi-Arabia, and a keen interest in the British plans for an Arab federation. An Arab specialist told me that Ibn Saud was alarmed at the jauntiness with which American specialists and missions had begun to 'investigate' the natural riches of the country. Behind this the Arabs suspected Wall Street.

On February 21 Saracoglu ostentatiously paid tribute to Turkey's ally, Britain. German queries were met by the Turks with polite but evasive replies. In Berlin many hard words were said in private about 'the hypocrisy in Ankara.' Schmidt at his *Stammtisch* described the Turks as 80 per cent. illiterates who had got on the wrong footing with all their neighbours and had to watch their step. Statements like this were, of course, no secret to the Turkish Embassy.

Such impertinence as the British displayed in the Near East under the very nose of Germany would, in 1941, have been replied to by an early morning blitz attack and a Hitler proclamation that the

Turkish Government had broken their promises. It also looked as if Berlin were playing with this idea. But it was probably never seriously considered. For one thing, the impossibility of getting the Bulgarians on the move rendered any action difficult. Schmidt at his *Stammtisch* did not conceal his disappointment. Bulgaria's great chance was to take part in this war, he said, but she did not want to. The Bulgarians were lacking a *Mythus* and had no sense of how they had become a nation.

The situation caused the Germans apprehension concerning Balkan countries too. During the winter months Rumania had lost between 200,000 and 300,000 men. Internal difficulties were aggravated by the rapidly developing inflation which no efforts could stop. The country was in a ferment of unrest. It was no secret that an influential group headed by the deputy Prime Minister, Mihail Antonescu, was trying to get into contact with the Allies.

Partisan war flourished in Serbia and Greece. Greek guerrillas had now taken to kidnapping high German officers—previously they had confined themselves to Italian. The Allied headquarters in Cairo were, thanks to good communications with the resistance movement, well informed of the increasing German troubles in the Balkans.

A real sensation occurred on February 5. Mussolini dismissed his son-in-law Ciano. A lot of rumours began to circulate. It was well known in Berlin that Ciano had lately shown an anti-German attitude. Now it was said that he had been sacked at the request of Germany, after the German Government had been able to prove that he had been negotiating privately about a separate peace with the Allies. If this were true the Germans could not possibly have felt very reassured by the fact that Ciano was given the pleasant post of Ambassador to the Vatican. Shortly afterwards Archbishop Spellman of New York visited the Holy Father.

It is a fair assumption that in the middle of February attempts were made to bring about an Italian separate peace. They fell through, because the parties could not come to an agreement about the conditions. The prospects in themselves should have been good. Not long afterwards a further cooling of the German-Italian relations could be observed. The differences arose out of the situation in North Africa.

The position in Libya grew more serious in February, and finally

Tripoli had to be abandoned. The evacuation was decided on after common discussions, but at the last minute the Italians changed their mind and demanded that the town should be defended. Excited scenes took place with mutual accusations of cowardice and so forth. The final outcome was that a large Italian force stayed behind and gave themselves up as prisoners almost without resistance. That was the heroic defence. More fuel was added to the German exasperation by the news that the Italian administration in occupied Libya was readily offering its services to the Allies.

Considerable German reinforcements arrived in Tunisia. At the end of February preparations for a long-term defence appeared to be under way, although the Germans were all the time anticipating that they would sooner or later have to give up the whole bridgehead. But Churchill's dictum about the master mind which planned the attack on Stalingrad and exposed the German Army there to catastrophe would come true in Tunisia too.

At the end of February the British began to put more weight into the air war. Essen and a number of other West German cities were subjected to devastating attacks. On March 1 it was Berlin's turn. A strong force attacked the city and could not be checked by the defences. An enormous number of high explosives and incendiaries was dropped. Since the wind freshened towards nightfall the fires spread at furious speed. When the population came out of the shelters the horizon was glowing, and a fire was raging in almost every block.

The raid of March 1 was the hardest blow the German capital had so far had to sustain during the war. Deep depression reigned during the following days, even though people reacted in different ways to the bombing. Goebbels tried by every possible means to counteract defeatism. Many awards were distributed to Berliners for bravery during the attack. The Press sang the praise of the population. "The Reich capital had stood up to the test," was the stock phrase. Immediately after the bombing Goebbels appeared in Breitenbachplatz in a steel helmet distributing bars of chocolate to the children. But during the following days neither he nor any of the other leaders was visible. The reason was simply that the Berliners had made their discontent known in an absolutely unmistakable way. A chorus reciting "We thank our Führer" had greeted the Nazi officials. In a single block of buildings thirty people



were arrested for "utterances hostile to the State," etc. Anecdotes of the following type were current:

"How did you get that black eye? Through the British?"

"Yes—indirectly."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, I went up to a friend in Steglitz [one of the worst-bombed districts] who was watching the smoking ruins of his house. I happened to greet him with 'Heil Hitler.'"

### *Journey to Vienna*

I had a holiday early in February and went to Vienna for a few weeks' study of the archives. It was with tense expectation that I entered the sleeper at Bahnhof Charlottenburg on my way to the city which had held a special enchantment for me since my wanderings as a student. I had certainly seen Vienna several times after that, but only for one or two days.

The Vienna I knew was the Vienna *before* the Anschluss, a city living in poverty and distress but yet exercising a unique fascination over the stranger. I shall always be grateful for having been allowed to travel through most European countries and particularly to Vienna, not as a luxury tourist or as a man whose time is counted in minutes, but as a student with little money though unlimited time. Those who have not seen Ottakringer Strasse and the outer districts where the stranger seldom goes, but only know Graben, Schönbrunn, and Hofburg, have got but a fragment of the picture.

My short visits during the years 1939-42 had shown a changed Vienna. But how much it had changed I did not realize until now.

All over Vienna I met with the war. Numerous hotels were requisitioned and transformed into hospitals; in Hofburg was a military hospital and in Schönbrunn another. All the tongues of the world were heard in the streets, particularly Croat and Ukrainian. The foreign workers lent character to the city, if possible even more so than in Berlin. Wounded, sick, and crippled, wandered about rendering fullest justice to Vienna's reputation as "the city of hospitals." The tram-cars were even more worn out and creaking, the taxis more rattling, and the railway stations more dirty than before. The plaster was flaking off the official palaces, and façades of more durable material gave evidence that they had not been attended to

for years. There was a little more to be had in the shops than in Berlin, but the food-shops were as gapingly empty as there. Yet the food seemed almost Elysian to one who came from Berlin. *Palatschinken*, thin pancakes, were still being served at the old aristocratic Sacher restaurant, and their quality had not deteriorated. The soups were delicious and contained no chemicals, and the bread was considerably better than in the German capital.

The small restaurants had not given up their 'specialities,' prepared with the greatest care. But everybody said that the food was deteriorating, and details revealed that the difference from German conditions was perhaps, after all, not so marked. Chips were sold everywhere in the streets. I shall not forget my disappointment when I went up and paid my coin expecting chestnuts, as in times past, and got a sooty grilled potato wrapped in paper.

The Viennese too disappointed me at first. Where was the amiability which had so impressed a Scandinavian? But one day I was told by a Swedish friend that I must demonstrate one way or another that I was a Swede, since my German accent would otherwise cause me to be taken for a Prussian and—treated accordingly.

He was right. When, in a restaurant where I had previously been treated curtly, to say the least of it, I produced an old copy of the *Svenska Dagbladet* the waiter rushed up to me and said with a glance at the paper, "The gentleman is Swedish!" He added a deliberate apology and complained that he had not realized it before—"I should then, of course, have treated you quite differently." Then he took my order, asked if he might serve a carafe of wine, and hurried away. At the sweet the proprietor appeared and apologized—he had earlier taken no notice of me—explaining he hoped that I was not offended, he had had no idea, and so forth.

For my next meal I went to another place where I had had a lively quarrel with the waiter. The same scene was repeated in almost exact detail. The hotel manager assured me of the pleasure he would take in arranging a nice table for me in future.

I was frankly a little embarrassed by the deliberate favouritism displayed everywhere as soon as I had introduced myself; finally I found it most convenient to show my Press pass to the manager. At times it was definitely awkward, for example, when I sat down at a table already occupied by a Prussian officer and got my food twenty minutes before him

A number of small incidents gave a clear insight into the relations between Germans and Austrians, or, more correctly, between North Germans and Austrians.

One day I saw a policeman reading a map and scrutinizing the street names. It looked peculiar—one would have expected a policeman to know his way about. A few days later I was given the explanation. In Operngasse a policeman, with a typical North German accent, asked a woman for Operngasse. The street at that point curved in a bend, and there was no signpost. To my amazement the woman replied with swift determination, "Turn to the left, and then take the third street on the right-hand side." The policeman thanked her and turned to the left. The woman noticed my astonishment, blushed a little, and hurried away.

I told this episode to one of my friends. He replied laughingly that no policeman knew the streets any longer since the honourable old Vienna police force had been moved to North Germany, owing to its unreliability, and been replaced by *Pifken*. Incidentally, this sobriquet for the Prussians had caught on completely once again.

Nobody, said my friend, failed to give a policeman a wrong direction, and all Prussians who had been here for some time had long ago stopped asking and taken to reading the map.

A few days later I was sitting in the tram-car 'G 2' when a policeman got in and asked the conductress if it was going to Hohe Warte. I was on my way there, but had not yet quite got my bearings and was therefore bewildered when the pretty conductress replied, "Oh, no; you must take the 'B.'" The policeman alighted, and the car went on its way. The passengers smiled happily, and so did the conductress—'B' went to the Prater, in the opposite direction.

Several of the passengers must have been Germans. When on the following day I asked how the Viennese dared behave in this way with so many Germans in town, he replied smilingly that no German wanted to reveal his identity on such occasions. He might report it afterwards, but then the conductress would of course have 'misheard.'

The shops were an interesting field for studies of atmosphere. It was the time of the large-scale closing down of shops, and the retailers were rapidly selling out their stocks. Anyone, Austrian or foreigner, could buy whatever was available, while the Prussians found everything 'sold out.' When a Prussian asked for something

the shop assistants pretended only to understand the Viennese dialect, or 'forgot' him, or produced some miserable trash, explaining with unmoved countenance that it was "special first-class material made in Berlin."

All other languages, however, were easily understood in the Viennese shops. Croats, Czechs, and Hungarians could speak their own tongues and were served politely. And when a shop assistant was given the opportunity of speaking, for example, French he was delighted. English was frequently heard too. When the assistants in a big antique-shop saw me and one of my colleagues in trench coats we were immediately addressed in perfect English, and on our departure the whole place bowed us out while two German women patiently waited for attention. Other shops implored us to buy something: "It's a pleasure to sell to you. Otherwise the Pifken take everything."

In every possible way the Austrians endeavoured to dissociate themselves from anything German. It was not so much National Socialism as Germanity in itself that they would no longer acknowledge. "We" were the Austrians, "the Germans" were the Germans from the Reich—in polite language; otherwise they were "Pifken." The German language was called "Pifké sisch" or "Pifkiné sisch." Incidentally these words if reported meant a fine of seventy marks.

The Germans were beginning to feel ill at ease in face of the animosity they were openly shown everywhere. It looked like a regular freezing-out campaign. Cautious Germans were said to have taken their families back to Germany.

Germans who could produce some extenuating circumstances did not fail to do so. Once in a shop I heard a declaration by a German which I had imagined was possible only in anecdotes. He said, "I am a Rhinelander and a Catholic." He was more politely treated.

My German friends in Vienna had many hard words for "the inconstancy, unreliability, and provoking ways" of the Austrians. But some of them admitted that there was not much to be done about it, since it was impossible to keep the North Germans from displaying their special mentality.

How strong hostile feelings had grown was shown by the fact that all private intercourse between Germans and Austrians had practically ceased. It had not been particularly lively even during

the Anschluss jubilee days. A German who had been living in Vienna since 1939 and who was apparently rather liked told me that, although in his office he was on cordial terms with his Austrian colleagues, several of whom were convinced National Socialists, he had still not been invited to their homes—except once when all the guests were Germans. The hostess had gone to the country on that day.

This chasm was not confined to the upper classes. A shoemaker, an old devoted Social Democrat whom I had known since 1936, told me that last year he had had to mobilize his entire family and threaten to expel his only daughter, because she wanted to marry a Hanoverian. Nothing served until the old man had tricked the unwelcome wooer into 'showing himself in his proper light.' I was not allowed to know how that had happened, but politics had obviously played a part.

Vienna was seething with opposition. Much of it was, of course, idle talk, and it is worth observing that an essential part of the fight against the Nazis and the Germans was carried on in the form of anecdotes.

The big call-up gave rise to the story about Methuselah whom the Lord had sent to earth on a mission to establish some order. Methuselah was quickly back. "Are you here again already?" said the Lord. "Well, I dared not stay any longer because I learned that Hitler had called up my class."

Two generals, one from Prussia and the other from Austria, were talking together. The latter complained that all people of German origin were being made responsible for the Prussian misdeeds. "But remember," said the North German general, "that *we* are made responsible for the whims of the Austrian Hitler." To which the Austrian replied, "That is our revenge for Königgrätz."

A school-teacher was hammering a propaganda tale into the children. "Who is our father?" "Adolf Hitler." "Who is our mother?" "Greater Germany." "What would you like to be?" Here the reply was supposed to be: "A pilot," "A tank driver," etc. But little Max from Vienna replied, "An orphan."

Hitler was given the pseudonym "Haschek." Mussolini was "Maschek" and Stalin "Staschek." But Churchill retained his proper name and enjoyed an almost fantastic popularity in Austria. At a party a woman had only just greeted the hostess when she added,

"How is he to-day?" "The last communiqué sounded hopeful," was the reply. After a full minute it dawned on me that they were talking about Churchill, who at the time was indisposed.

The Nazi awards were subjected to a lot of ridicule. The oak-leaf, *das Eichenlaub*, was called *Leichenlaub* (corpse leaf). The Swastika was called *die Tarantel* (tarantula).

Prisoners of war were extremely well treated by the Viennese. Now and again they slipped cigarettes to them and food, which was extraordinary considering the limited rations.

The advertising columns were used for small demonstrations such as: "Owing fat shortage, will exchange frying-pan for Hitler picture," or: "Offer exchange assortment Hitler pictures for anything edible."

The solidarity between Austrians could not be mistaken. If a German from the Reich had a controversy with an Austrian there was always a crowd of eyewitnesses in favour of the latter. The reverse was unthinkable.

Opposition had for a long time taken more active forms too. Flying police patrols armed to the teeth were at large by night, but could not prevent acts of sabotage. Absolute ruthlessness was applied by the Gestapo against Communists. Sixty death sentences were pronounced in one single day in Vienna, and there were always some 250 to 300 persons waiting for their death sentence to be confirmed from Berlin.

Large-scale riots had as yet not taken place. Smaller disturbances had occurred, but had been easily quelled. Nazi bosses found the tyres of their cars cut, and a German soldier in Grinzing had been killed by thirty Austrian women after he had stated that Germany had lost Stalingrad because of the behaviour of the Austrian units.

It is seldom one party's fault if two quarrel, and the Viennese seemed in their disappointment and war-weariness quick to forget that many of them had on March 13, 1938, cheered the same men whom they now despised. But it was more than a sobering up, it was the beginning of a national awakening, and the principal reason for this was the tremendous invasion of Germans from the Reich into the country, and the subsequent personal contact between Germans and Austrians. Austrians of all classes had met with Germans from the Reich of all classes. They had learned to know each other thoroughly. The outcome was disastrous from the German point of view. It was no easy task to reconcile the proud Austrians to

the idea that their country should become a junior appendage of Germany. Success would have demanded a great deal of tact. But you only had to stay for a few days in Vienna in order to realize that the Germans had failed completely.

They behaved almost as in the occupied countries. Everything valuable was sucked out of Austria, from food to fine handicraft. The museums had been plundered of their treasures, which had been sold to antique-dealers—often Jews—abroad. No grass grew where the Nazi locust swarm had passed.

Nevertheless, the looting did not perhaps mean so much to the Austrians as the systematic blunders of the Germans. It looked as if they wanted deliberately to hurt Austrian feelings. For all that sensible German officers had done to prevent it, the Austrians were generally very badly treated in the Wehrmacht, except where they constituted purely Austrian units, which the Germans prevented as far as possible. In the German units Prussian N.C.O.s—as well as the new "Party officers"—tried to teach the Austrians manners. Since the Austrians did not think this necessary, there were steady conflicts. I cannot say how many Austrian soldiers I met who complained that they had been called "Ostmark swine," that they had been, as a matter of course, called upon to empty latrines, etc.

A great many official measures raised bad blood in Austria. Every good Austrian, for example, felt it a blow in the face when the wonderful Gobelins from the Hofburg were taken to Hitler's new chancellery in Berlin, and the Austrian State regalia were carried away from Vienna. The transfer of the remains of the Duke of Reichstadt to Paris was another move bound to cause irritation. But everyday incidents certainly had a major share in the deterioration of public feeling. The Nazis were waging war against the conception of "Austria." Later on even the name Ostmark was forbidden. The next stage in the process of assimilation was marked by the introduction of "die Donau- und Alpenländer."

I returned from Vienna to Berlin in March, knowing that at least the capital of old Austria was lost politically to the Third Reich. Reliable observers gave me assurances to the same effect about the situation in the former Austrian Crown-lands. Graz, which had been one of the Nazi strongholds, had changed character. But one town remained faithful—at least in February—Hitler's Linz.

## IX

### SPRING 1943

#### *African Campaign: Allied Concentration against Italy*

THE TEMPORARY AXIS INITIATIVE IN TUNISIA DURING FEBRUARY WAS soon reversed. The Allies received constant reinforcements, and from the south General Montgomery's Eighth Army, which the Italians openly recognized as the best army in the world, was advancing slowly but surely. Strangely enough, the Italian Navy was not employed. The British were operating almost unchallenged at sea except for light enemy naval forces.

In the latter part of March the Eighth Army went into attack on the Mareth line, where Rommel's troops had halted. Part of the British forces by-passed the line at the same time as a strong frontal thrust was launched. It was not long before the Axis troops, owing to the great numerical superiority of the Allies and their complete mastery of the air, were compelled to abandon the whole Mareth position and withdraw towards Gabes. The Americans had attacked from the west and driven a deep flank thrust into the German-controlled area. Some Axis units had to capitulate in the fortified line at Mareth. But the retreat was, of course, carried out 'according to plan.'

The setbacks brought Italy into focus. The German papers suddenly published lengthy explanations about the impossibility of an Italian separate peace. "Italy stands nearer to us than ever," wrote the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Italian south coast were described as well-defended sections of the Fortress of Europe.

Quite different opinions were voiced in private. German officers complained bitterly about Italian slackness and defeatism and stated that it would be better to occupy the country than to leave conditions as they were. Travellers from Italy reported a deterioration in public feeling which threatened Mussolini's position. All Germans were, however, sure that the Italian dictator was sticking to the alliance with Germany out of personal conviction.

In April the Allies speeded up the regrouping for the decisive



blow. On the 6th the Eighth Army resumed its offensive, now at Chott-el-Djerid, and already on the following day Sommerfeldt had to admit that Montgomery had succeeded in breaking through the German line. The Axis troops were thrown northward with heavy losses and barely escaped being surrounded.

The British at that time expressed astonishment at the relatively bad German-Italian strategy. In Berlin rumours had been circulating for several weeks that Rommel was seriously ill and had been compelled to leave the front; these were later on officially confirmed.

Montgomery proceeded methodically, forcing the Axis troops to continue their retreat northward. Strong Allied forces also attacked in the west, and the bridgehead was being squeezed together as at Stalingrad.

There were further reasons for anxiety. Air activity against Italy was intensified. Malta was becoming a steadily stronger offensive base, and the shadow of an impending decision was deepening over Italy. No surprise was therefore caused in journalistic circles when it was reported that Hitler and Mussolini were to meet. The usual official secrecy was maintained. Braun von Stumm—in the absence of Schmidt, who was considered so important that he had to be present at these meetings—reminded us of the regulations prohibiting mention of the meetings of statesmen. But, as often before, there was a leakage. This time the culprit was the newly constituted agency Transocean-Europa Press, which dispatched a cable. The Foreign Office foamed with rage and demanded the sinner's head on a plate. It is doubtful whether they got it—powerful influences were behind the agency.

This Hitler-Mussolini meeting was remarkable in so far as the comments it evoked were liable to frighten even the most devoted follower. It was pointed out that the two statesmen "after a thorough consideration of the possibilities of the situation had concluded that the Axis can win through a total and uncompromising employment of all their resources." Never before had anything similar been said. It had not been held necessary to justify the certitude of victory.

It was generally believed in Berlin that Hitler and Mussolini had decided to evacuate the Tunisian armies under cover of the Italian Navy and the Luftwaffe. It would probably have been possible as

late as mid-April for considerable forces to get away. A move of that kind was, however, incompatible with Hitler's character. I cannot say for certain whether it was this or other reasons which dictated the decision to fight it out in Tunisia.

The narrowed bridgehead which the Axis troops were holding after the retreat in the south had been temporarily interrupted in the Enfidaville area, was still quite strong. It was apparently expected to be able to hold out for several weeks. Certainly, things had developed surprisingly slowly in North Africa. The German-Italian commanders also had the advantage of the inner lines, a fact which was strongly emphasized in Berlin.

But the Allies were to deliver a final surprise in Tunisia. At the end of April an attack was launched along the whole line without producing any result worth mentioning during the first few days. Berlin declared that the Eighth Army had attacked with weak forces owing to the losses which this, the foremost of British armies, had sustained. But in point of fact Montgomery's main force had made a big circuit and marched up behind the central sector. The Germans and Italians had, thanks to their complete inferiority in the air, apparently not got wind of this, but were still keeping strong forces in the farthest south to counter the pressure from the Eighth Army which was anticipated there.

A few days' lull occurred at the end of the month, but at the beginning of May the Allies directed a formidable blow against the German-Italian lines from the west after an artillery and air bombardment almost unequalled during this war. Then the Allied storm troops advanced like a steam-roller and, within a short time, the whole Axis position was wound up. Mateur was taken, and on May 7 Berlin admitted that the Axis troops were retreating and that the situation was extremely serious.

On the following day Tunisia was frankly stated to be lost. Sommerfeldt had, of course, to be more careful and pointed to the fact that German-Italian troops were still putting up resistance in the Bon peninsula and in isolated hedgehog positions. The Axis troops would fight to the last cartridge, it was stated. But on the 11th Sommerfeldt admitted that the British had made a deep penetration into the peninsula, and that the position was hopeless. The campaign was definitely finished on May 13.

Practically nothing of the Axis armies in Tunisia had been saved.

The shipping losses during the last months had also been considerable, and the number of transport planes shot down was simply terrific—ninety on a single day, although this figure was, of course, an exception.

The defeat was all the greater as the annihilated or captured units were among the best of the German Army. Rommel's legendary Afrika Korps no longer existed. The Hermann Göring division had suffered extremely heavy losses.

Tunisia was another Stalingrad, there is no doubt about that. But the final fighting in Africa was not the same heroic story as Paulus's last fight in the ruins of Stalingrad. The German soldiers and the Italians too had fought bravely even during the last stage of the battle of Tunisia. But in face of the enormous pressure of incessant artillery and air bombardment—without proper support from their own corresponding weapons—and incessant Allied attacks with fresh troops, the Germans and Italians were worn out and collapsed in the same way as the French under the blitz thrust of the Wehrmacht.

The officers generally held out to the end and tried to make their troops resist to the last man. The official slogan was that nobody was allowed to give in before the ammunition had run out and the supplies were destroyed. But the serious thing was that the troops did not want to play. On several occasions they laid down their arms, giving up big supplies. Captivity in a British prisoners' camp was no frightening prospect to them. It had been different at Stalingrad.

The British had made masterly propaganda. A German military doctor told me that the last ship which left Tunisia was a hospital ship. It was overtaken at sea by a British destroyer and ordered to return to Bizerta, then already occupied by the Allies. On arrival the ship was searched very meticulously, but since everything was in order the British commander apologized and gave his word that the ship, which had several thousand wounded and in addition the highest German medical staffs on board, could depart immediately. He excused the thorough search of the ship by referring to the fact that two Italian hospital ships had had a cargo of petrol and therefore been sunk. Before the German hospital ship left British doctors came on board distributing whisky, cigarettes ("the first decent cigarettes we had had for weeks," said my informant), and bars of

chocolate. Furthermore, since the medical equipment on board had by this time become rather poor the British bandaged the German wounded and put a munificent supply at the German doctors' disposal. But, of course, they did not produce a word of propaganda! The ship departed, escorted to the Italian coast by the same British destroyer which had seized it.

This story, said my source, was spread among all the German troops in Italy within a few days. Arrived at Naples, the wounded made statements like: "If *that's* the enemy, then I won't play any more!" But everything had been so hearty, spontaneous, and without bias and, above all, without 'propaganda' that the crew and the passengers of that hospital ship were under a spell. When a wounded German officer had rudely refused cigarettes or something of the sort even his men had reacted against him.

Certain incidents had occurred before the final stage in Tunisia which were likely to have disconcerted the German leaders. Thus an Austrian crack regiment was reported to have gone over, headed by its officers, to the enemy. Himmler then went to Vienna in person to supervise the confinement to concentration camps of all the next-of-kin of the regiment's personnel. He also made sure that this became known throughout Austria.

German propaganda had adapted itself at an early stage to the fall of Tunisia. In the beginning Goebbels had stressed the importance of the Tunisian bridgehead and, on the strength of that, had questioned the whole value of the Allied landing in North Africa. But in April, in good time before the collapse, he produced a new tune for his orchestra. It was, in brief—without exactly touching the possibility that the bridgehead might collapse—to emphasize the strength of the European south wall and to maintain that the Allied strategic aim of opening the Mediterranean for Anglo-American shipping could not be achieved by an occupation of the Tunisian coast alone.

Every German, of course, realized that Italy had suddenly been exposed to a direct threat. But the Press breathed utmost confidence. Count Hans Reischach wrote that life was hard and full of sacrifices, tears, and worries for the Italians, but that Fascism had taken on the task of mobilizing "the country's last energies for victory." All Germans who had been in Italy or knew anything about the atmosphere there were, however, pessimistic. German anxiety was further

aggravated by the news that the Italian workers were to be brought home from Germany. "They have been Italy's only contribution to the war," said people in Berlin. The sarcastic stated that victory demanded Russian arms, British food, the Italians as the enemy, and Hitler as the Unknown Soldier.

But Hitler would, according to the opinion of most Germans in May, prevent any Italian attempt to 'jump off.' It was pointed out everywhere that German troops in Italy were strong enough to organize a defence independent of Italy's own resources.

The more serious the situation became in North Africa, the more the German officials belittled the fighting there. When it was over the Press said that the Axis had received a surface wound, but that resistance in Africa had postponed an Allied invasion for "decisive months," giving the Axis an opportunity to strengthen their southern front and bring up reserves.

The reaction of the German people was quite different. The outcome in Tunisia was interpreted as a real defeat and not as a 'setback.' Yet the defeat was far from being felt as deeply as Stalingrad. The main reason for this was the knowledge that the captured sons of Germany were going to American and British prisoners' camps instead of an uncertain fate in Russia. In spite of all propaganda against "the plutocracies" and in spite of the air attacks the attitude of the German people towards the Western Powers proved to be quite different from their attitude towards Russia. You would hear people say, "Now the boys will at least get decent cigarettes." An acquaintance of mine once said dreamily, "It wouldn't have been so bad to have been taken prisoner in Tunisia!"

However, the whole discussion of the African campaign suddenly ceased. The probable originator of the subtle measure which brought about this result was Dr Goebbels.

### *Defeatism*

It had been said for a long time that it would be necessary to cut down the food rations, but that it had been postponed as long as possible. It was, after ten years of Nazism, usually possible to make the German people accept almost anything. But no German could be expected to have forgotten Göring's speech in 1942 and his definite

promise that the increase in rations which had then been introduced would be maintained and even augmented.

Now, suddenly, on May 10 it was announced that for the next ration period the meat ration would be cut from 350 to 250 grammes weekly. This caused excited discussion among the German public. The wave of anger rose high, and in one stroke Tunisia was out of the picture.

The tactics of killing a piece of bad news with one even worse is very effective. Tunisia was not remembered again when summer arrived and more vegetables gradually came on the table.

This does not mean that public morale had improved. There were towards the end of spring 1943 many symptoms that the German people, and particularly the population of Berlin, were being gripped by war-weariness to an extent never before witnessed.

The two main reasons for this were that even the most stubborn optimists began to despair about the outcome of the struggle, and that the German capital began to feel the ordeals of the war with ever growing force.

Direct opposition still made itself hardly felt. One of its manifestations had even practically disappeared, perhaps due to the increasing exhaustion. The familiar Berlin wisecracks led a languishing life. The few that remained were either sepulchral like "Enjoy the war, the peace will be terrible," or old worn-out anecdotes. One of the most long-lived was about the bombed-out man who walked round with a requisition slip to the tailors to get a suit. The result was negative. Finally he burst out, "And all this because of one single man!" He was, of course, brought promptly before Pontius Pilate, who asked him what he had meant. The man replied, "I meant Churchill, of course—whom did your Honour mean?" Another was about the optimist and the pessimist. The optimist said, "How terrible—we are losing the war." The pessimist replied, "Yes, but *when*?"

But Goebbels continued his cunning fight against defeatism. The results were limited, yet it was often surprising to see what he achieved by simple methods.

One example was the personification of the Berlin grumblers as Herr Bramsig and Frau Knöterich. Posters were put up all over the place with small verses about their misdeeds, in particular the radio offence.

Bramsig was pictured as a tall, melancholy man with a bald head, while Frau Knöterich was fat but lively. Both of them begin their day by tuning in to the London radio. It isn't long before Herr Bramsig and Frau Knöterich have communicated their fresh information to neighbours and relatives, and it is gradually spread farther and farther. The end is inevitably the same on the coloured posters—two strong policemen arrest the pair.

One symptom that public feeling was coming to a head was the hatred of foreigners. Well-dressed foreigners were attacked, cars with the CD-plate had their tyres cut, and foreigners with parcels were subjected to unpleasant attention. There was also a marked upward curve of criminality. More and more thefts of ration cards were reported—often committed by half-starved foreign workers who sometimes even murdered for a few bread coupons. Foreigners who received food parcels from abroad found them looted from time to time.

The food problem dominated the daily life of the Berliners. It was a mystery how the housewives could manage, as they often had to queue for hours for a few raddish stalks to be used as spinach. Vegetable markets were a pathetic sight. Generally there were only three different things to be had, and before people began to queue in they had to inquire how large the stock was in order not to queue in vain.

All *legal* means of diluting rationed foodstuffs with unrationed commodities disappeared, and even the biggest private stocks melted to nothing.

A serious thing was that fish had become practically unobtainable. You were lucky if you got a little once every second month.

It was then clear that the black market would grow in importance. The extent of the black-market business was likewise an important indication of how the war morale had deteriorated. When I left Berlin almost everything was available, but at terrible prices. The price of coffee was 300 marks a kilogramme or more, butter 120 marks, cigarettes 50 pfennigs a piece or even one mark. One of my friends told me how a stranger had snatched a cigarette from him, pressed one mark in his hand, and hurried away with the words, "Excuse me, but I must have a cigarette!" There were also spirits at fancy prices. I once heard somebody boast that he had got hold of fine French brandy for 'only' 250 marks a bottle.

The black market had its wholesalers just as the legal trade. The whole profession could carry on by bribing the police and using strict discretion. Now and then an example was made, and if the offence was big enough the culprit lost his life. The law was extremely rigorous, and the Nazis liked to draw comparisons with 1918. "He who tries to extract his sordid gains out of the distress of the Fatherland is a bloodsucker and a parasite who can expect no mercy," as an official pamphlet about war-time legislation put it.

The risks were great, but the prizes were corresponding. Many succeeded, moreover, in keeping formally on the right side of the law by always anxiously observing the fixed maximum prices. This could be done without making the business less lucrative. If somebody, for example, had two bottles of brandy and wanted coffee then he could get 1½ kilogramme which were 'debited' at, say, 5.80 marks. The owner of the two brandy bottles in his turn debited the peace-time price of perhaps 5 marks a bottle. The transaction was completed by the coffee-seller's solemnly handing over the difference—4.20 marks.

During the first half of 1943 moral disintegration reached such a point that hardly a single German remained quite loyal. Every one was involved in some little 'black' business. The value of money had deteriorated tremendously. There was no shortage of money in spite of the high taxation, but of goods of almost every category. Since the State tried by every possible means to tie up the surplus money and its owners tried by every possible means to invest it in real values, there was an incessant struggle between the two interested parties. It was generally bound to end in victory for the individual, since the law could not close every loophole. There were the most drastic examples of what people would buy just in order to get rid of the money. The question was no longer, "Do I need this or that?" or, "What does it cost?" but only, "Is it for sale?" If that was the case the price was a secondary matter.

The black market got a substantial portion of their goods directly or indirectly from the armed forces. This was in my view one of the most significant indications of the state of morale. 'Black' petrol usually came from the Army, and one even came across trading in Army petrol coupons. Big swindles took place at the depots and the *étape*. The signs were grave even if the phenomenon had not grown to the same proportions as in 1918.



A veritable wholesale trade in cars flourished within the Forces. A mission of one officer and two privates was, for example, sent out by a military authority to an occupied country to buy private cars. They bought twelve cars for which they paid 50,000 marks. On their return they accounted for six cars while six were sold to private purchasers for 75,000 marks. The profit was thus 50,000 marks.

More than one transaction might be completed during such an expedition. The mission could in addition bring back diverse goods from the occupied country which were sold in the black market at many times the price paid. Something which was short in the occupied territory could then be bought with the money and the profit thus further enhanced.

The increase in working hours—ten hours was practically the minimum, the average being eleven or twelve—contributed to the physical exhaustion of the people. The development in this respect was accelerated during the spring. I was, in fact, often astonished by the fantastic toughness the people displayed.

Many of their achievements seemed almost unbelievable.

Let us accompany a German civil servant of the lower middle classes on his day. It is fair to assume that he is living in one of Berlin's suburbs—only a few live in the centre.

The alarm goes at six o'clock. At 6.45 he has a quick breakfast of a few slices of bread and a little *Ersatz* coffee or *Ersatz* tea. At seven Herr Müller sets out for his bus. He is lucky if it is only a ten-minute walk and he catches the 7.15—provided it is not full up, in which case he will have a long wait for the next one. After half an hour he is in the centre and after another ten minutes at his office, perhaps housed in an old elementary school.

After four hours' hard work Herr Müller has his dinner-hour. If he can he works through it with a covert sandwich and has it subtracted at the end of the day. If he cannot bring sandwiches he must hurry out and try to get something somewhere, which will not amount to much unless he is a regular customer, and the proprietor, with an eye to the future, gives him small favours. He has to queue for a table and then wait patiently to be served a potato soup or sometimes a meat course. The meat ration of 250 grammes only provides five meat courses a week of 50 grammes—or, in fact, 40, as the bones are also counted—which is not very much for a grown man. With

the meat he gets warmed-up potatoes and perhaps a little salad, and to follow—if Müller is a brave man with a good stomach—a sweet popularly described as “genuine I.G.-Farben.” With this meal is served a weak beer which, nevertheless, remains the bright spot. But Müller has to hasten back, otherwise his colleague will get nothing at all—after 1 P.M. there is generally nothing to be had.

At seven o'clock Müller, after ten hours' work, walks out of his office and is, with luck, home by eight.

Müller does not, of course, do this every single day. If the work is hard it would not be possible. Saturday is usually a half-holiday from 1 or 2 P.M.

On Sunday Müller has, in his capacity of devoted Party member, his Party appeals, his A.R.P. course, and his extra-watch duty at the office—the latter in return for the hours he has had off during the week for urgent personal affairs, as, for example, shopping.

Müller's life is infinitely grey and sad. It is seldom he is able to have any entertainment, such as a cinema. If he is not too tired to read it is usually a newspaper. Perhaps he listens a little to the Deutschlandssender, since Müller is a loyal man. Meeting these little German civil servants or the long files of German workers in the streets was a pathetic sight calling for sympathy. But meeting Herr Müller in his office, magisterial, self-assured, and unwaveringly industrious, gave another impression. Then he was “Herr Beamter” and nobody to poke fun at.

One of the Berliners' most difficult problems was the housing question. It was all right if you had a flat from which you had not been turned out by the Forces, the S.S., or any other official organization. But if you did not have one you had to resort to a hotel or a furnished room. And the hotels were overcrowded, and the furnished rooms did not exist.

Once, as early as 1941, I tried to get hold of a flat, but the authority I applied to told me it was no good. In that place alone six generals and admirals were on the waiting list and could not be accommodated.

Since then housing facilities in Berlin have been further cut down by the air attacks. Drastic measures were applied in the spring of 1943 to accommodate the bombed-out. The authorities sent out forms to all households, who had to report how many rooms they had, how many people were living there, and so forth. More than one room per person was not allowed—above that one had to take a

lodger. Everybody, of course, tried to escape as long as possible. Husbands and sons who were called up were returned as living at home. But the billeting authorities knew all the tricks and responded bluntly: "If you don't want to take in anyone we shall see to it that you don't have a roof over your head when your house is bombed." Moreover, contumacy was an offence against the "*Volksgemeinschaft*" and every German knew the punishment for that.

One category benefited from the threat of lodgers—the foreigners, who were much in demand as tenants. Many, of course, preferred a high-paying foreigner in his home to a compulsorily billeted, bombed-out family.

One regulator of housing facilities in Berlin had ceased functioning—the Jews. Previously their flats were confiscated "when needed," but now this possibility was exhausted.

A tragic chapter was approaching its close. After Goebbels' speech in March 1943 a new wave of deportations swept through Berlin. The Jews were collected under incredibly brutal circumstances—even in the streets—in order to make the procedure conspicuous and thus achieve a psychological effect. They were gathered together in some of the synagogues and then taken away to the East. The moanings of the unfortunate people could be heard from the synagogue at Lewetzowstrasse. On the opposite side of the street was an S.S. barracks where the young S.S. soldiers used to lean out of the windows to watch the spectacle. On one occasion when I was present loud salvos of laughter broke out when another lorry drew up crowded with old Jews.

From time to time during the spring you ran across transports of Jews in the street, which left an appalling impression. The faces of the captives told of a desperation and hopelessness which inspired sympathy and indignation not only among foreigners.

The last Jews were evacuated from my district early in May. In one of the houses opposite ours lived a Jewish family. Their little flat was always so tidy. One day it was empty. The kitchen curtain had got caught up outside and hung like that week after week. Then the usual transport arrived and carried away everything, down to the curtain rods.

On entering another house where Jews had been living, my wife walked into the midst of the evacuation of a flat. Nobody said

anything to her. The men were working quietly and methodically. Everything was listed, packed up, and carried away. Both the flat and the furniture had been coveted. A week later a new family was putting up its curtains.

I do not know whether Berlin at the time of writing is entirely devoid of Jews. That would probably have been announced by the Nazis. But on my departure the remainder was estimated to be only three to four thousand. They were the kind of people whom the authorities were not so anxious to remove—most of them were occupied in disarming delayed-action bombs, cleaning out bombed houses, emptying dustbins, and so forth. The later actions against the Jews did not pass entirely without resistance. Prominent Nazis tried to persuade the leaders to give up the persecutions, owing to the reaction of the people. In some cases even armed resistance occurred when Jews were to be deported. All the inhabitants of a block in Fasanenstrasse, not far from the Auslandspresseklub, resisted when one or two Jews were fetched. A thirteen-year-old girl was shot during the incident.

There were many signs of increasing popular disapproval of the brutal treatment of the Jews when they were collected, during their transport, and afterwards. The following incident belongs to my last memories of Berlin.

I was on my way to my police station in Sächsische Strasse to report my departure when I noticed *die grüne Minna*—the feared "Black Maria," which is green in Berlin—standing outside. Suddenly a very old woman was brought out of the station into the carriage. Her face was numbed with fright.

As the car started an elderly German woman rushed up to it and tried to open the door, but was hustled off. She was shouting all the time hysterically, "But she is no Jewess—I've known her for thirty years, and I know that she is no Jewess!" The car disappeared, and finally she went in to the officer I was on my way to see and beseeched him to save her friend, with whom she had been living for half a lifetime. "I know that she is no Jewess," she sobbed. "You must help me."

The policeman squirmed, embarrassed, and tried to calm her down by telling her that nothing would happen to her deported friend. But the woman cried, "I know what they do with the Jews!" She was not to be pacified, and when the policeman discovered me,

whom he recognized as a foreigner, he took her by the arm and led her out, telling her that she was lucky to have been spared from accompanying her friend.

We stood there silent, the policeman and I, while he noted down my departure. When I was about to leave he said half to himself, "*We can't help it, you know.*"

One might have thought that the Nazis would have stepped warily in view of the reaction of the German people. But instead, throughout the spring, the leaders were pondering plans to make short work also of "the mongrels, Class I"—in other words the half-Jews.

### *Bombs over Berlin*

During the spring of 1943 the air war became more and more of a strain even from the military point of view. The steadily growing devastation created new problems of organization which indirectly influenced the conduct of the war. The immediate military damage was great too. A German journalist reported that as early as March one-third of the Krupp works in Essen had been wiped out. The destruction was not, of course, distributed evenly, but one-third of the area was so badly hit by bombs that the installations there must be considered eliminated.

Taking German heavy industry as a whole, the damage was still moderate. Before the Möhne and Eder dams had been blown up in May conservative foreign observers estimated the average damage to the West German production at not much more than 10 per cent. Later on it got worse. The action against the dams in particular had enormous consequences. There is no exaggeration in the statement that it was one of the hardest blows Germany has received during the war. Not only were masses of people drowned, supplies of food, textiles, etc., destroyed, and the whole taxation system and the assessment in large areas disorganized—the flood carried away parish registers, police registers, documents of value, and so forth. To this were added distinctly military consequences: supplies of electrical power were cut down, and the water level sank in the big, vital canals with the result that ships and barges had to travel with lighter cargoes. It is no small matter to replace the quantities of water which broke through even if the dams themselves could be repaired. From a military point of view, therefore, this operation

and the attacks on the industrial districts in the West were much more important than the bombing of Berlin. But the raids on a city which had become a symbol of National Socialism meant a great deal, apart from the damage.

Foreigners who arrived in Berlin during 1941 and 1942 expected to find a city in ruins. But they had, in fact, to search for traces of air attacks. The war had ravaged Berlin too, but it is a big city, and the effects in the central quarters were insignificant.

Furthermore, the German capital had a repair service which worked at fantastic speed and had often effaced the traces of bomb hits and fire in the course of a week. During the first year of war the Berlin authorities made extraordinary efforts to conceal bomb damage, and much money, material, and labour were used up in restoring the scene to its original condition. It was important from the propaganda point of view to be able to show that the British attacks had in actual fact been pin-pricks. When repairs were impossible a hoarding was set up in front of the building with a poster to the effect that construction work was being carried out by this or that firm. Strangers visiting Berlin were amazed at the flourishing building trade in the town.

Gradually damage mounted up, and in 1942 all extensive repairs ceased. Instead, the worst-battered streets were barred off, after glass and debris had been cleared away. From that time Berlin's face changed radically. This was largely due to the heavy attack on March 1, 1943, which, in a few hours, devastated the face of the city.

The attacks later in March and in April were on a far smaller scale, but certain districts were, nevertheless, badly hit. In April the many British Secret Service agents in the German capital began to spread the rumour that Hitler's birthday on April 20 would be celebrated by an attack compared with which everything experienced earlier would be child's play. A feverish clearing of lofts began, and those who could left town on the 19th.

On the 20th Berlin was reinforced with motorized anti-aircraft batteries. The whole population packed their shelter bags and prepared for the worst. Sure enough, the alarm went some time after midnight, followed by twenty to thirty seconds of fierce anti-aircraft fire. But after a few bombs the artillery ceased fire, and

"Raiders passed" was sounded. Most people did not go to bed, but waited for a couple of hours in the firm belief that the British would return. But they did not turn up. The Royal Air Force had played a trick on the German capital.

On the following day I received a piece of information which put the event in a new light. An acquaintance of mine had suddenly had soldiers billeted on him. They made no secret of having come from Stettin. Practically the whole mobile anti-aircraft both there and in Rostock had been hurriedly removed to Berlin, they reported. This was apparently just what the British wanted. After their agents had informed them by radio that Stettin and Rostock were shorn of their anti-aircraft defences these towns were attacked with, at least in the case of Stettin, catastrophic results.

In May Berlin was mainly visited by Mosquitoes, with the purpose of disturbing and wearing down the population. The attacks were so frequent that the German authorities ceased reporting them in their war communiqués. Previously they had usually been admitted a few days later. One or two British daylight attacks were of no greater significance.

The effects of air raids on the physical endurance of the population are often overlooked. The British frequently dropped just a few bombs, but remained over Berlin or its vicinity for such a long time that the population had to spend hours in the shelters in the middle of the night. Earlier it had almost been a sport not to go to the shelters. Those who refrained referred to the small effect of the bombs and to the poor quality of the shelters.

One would have thought that Berlin would be sufficiently well equipped with solid shelters and other protection against air attack. Earlier than anywhere else arrows showing the way to the shelters had been put up. Anti-aircraft measures had been taken in Berlin long before and on a much wider scale than, for example, in London, to say nothing of Stockholm. But in actual fact Berlin was probably not particularly well protected, not even according to earlier war-time standards. The truth seems to be that the Germans had not been counting on large-scale air raids on their capital.

Shortage of labour and material prevented later improvements. The result was that the shelters in the German capital were not comparable with the Swedish. What usually happened was that cellars of houses had simply been cleared of rubbish and possibly

reinforced with one or two props, whereupon they were called shelters. The construction of most cellars in Berlin was much inferior to those in Stockholm. Reinforcements, which were compulsory in Sweden, could only be carried out to a limited extent in Berlin. Going to a shelter is perhaps in itself not particularly amusing, but in these conditions it was thoroughly depressing. The sight of water-pipes under the ceiling, gas-pipes along the walls, and a drain-pipe from the ceiling to the floor was not very reassuring. If, in addition to this, you knew that the roof of the shelter would not hold if the house were blasted, then you might be excused for not feeling too exhilarated.

In 1941 the Berliners started building basement passages from one house to another. But the risk of being suffocated or buried alive still remained greater than that of being hit by bomb fragments or trapped by fire. Two buildings in Zähringer Strasse, close to our home, collapsed. Some hundred people were buried under the debris in the shelters. A few were rescued, but many were suffocated.

Rescue work was extremely complicated. Excavators could seldom be used owing to the risk that the whole house or the debris would collapse. Instead it had to be removed brick by brick. On one occasion some trapped people were freed by digging a long passage through a coal-heap and then pushing a narrow carpet through the passage. The victims sat down on the mat and voyaged to freedom by this unusual vehicle.

Nevertheless, Berlin's population got used to going to the shelters almost without exception, equipped with gas-masks against dust. After all, it was soothing to the nerves to be with other people.

Damage in Berlin was fairly evenly distributed throughout the city. As late as spring 1943 the western districts had suffered least. In the centre considerable damage remained round Unter den Linden from the attacks in 1941 and 1942. Some repairs had been done. The Opera, for example, had been restored, or rather rebuilt since only the naked walls had been left. The University and the famous Prussian State Library were also put into working order. Nothing was done to the Catholic Hedwigskirche.

One of my first experiences of raids in Berlin was a bomb which completely demolished a large store in Hausvogteiplatz. In the morning I came across the frightening sight of a great number of people lying in the street, covered with dust-sheets. A passer-by



kicked the heap, and I was just about to protest when I discovered that the corpses were wax models.

The British tried in almost every attack to hit the Friedrichstrasse railway station, but it seemed to be invulnerable. The bombs fell everywhere in the neighbourhood except on the station itself. Once one or two tracks were ripped up but easily repaired. The only real damage to the station was not caused by aerial bombs but by one which had been placed there by a saboteur.

The official buildings round Wilhelmstrasse were left relatively untouched. The Ministry of Transport in Wilhelmplatz had its top floor destroyed, and Göring's Ministry was hit by a well-placed bomb which wiped out the premises of twenty-seven departments of the Air Ministry. Goebbels' Ministry has escaped up to the time of writing. Farther south and particularly in the south-west there was considerable damage. Driving down Potsdamerstrasse and Hauptstrasse in Schöneberg, one saw a great number of buildings wholly or partially destroyed. In the suburbs of Zehlendorf, Lichterfelde, and Dahlem the residential quarters were badly hit, and the houses of many well-known personalities destroyed. Some of the S.S. barracks in this district were hit, in other cases the surrounding houses. A typical example was to be found at the crossing between Kronprinzenallee and Königin Luise-Strasse where a number of villas were wrecked, but the barracks escaped.

The west, and particularly Wilmersdorf, were roughly handled. The surroundings of Prager Platz and Motzstrasse were devastated to an extent unequalled elsewhere in the town. It was a sinister experience to pass here by night, the moon shining through burnt-out gables and not a sound to be heard. The fantastic silhouettes looked like the wings of a theatre or a scene from ancient times. Desert in a capital A.D. 1943 . . .

Nachodstrasse, Bambergerstrasse, and Aschaffenburgstrasse had to be shut off for the time being. More to the west, where the enormous palace of the German High Command was the principal target, Zähringerstrasse was one of the worst. Several of the big garages in this district were wrecked, among others the Auto-Union where many cars perished in the fire. One of the big council schools in Münstersche Strasse had to interrupt classes. It was provisionally repaired. Bricks and debris were cleared away and the empty windows covered with paper. But in bad weather the

paper blew away, and then there was nothing else to do but to give up for the duration—to the great delight of the children.

As late as spring 1943 relatively little damage was seen in Kurfürstendamm. In the direction of Halensee station it resumed noticeable proportions. The garden suburb of Grunewald behind the station had had a very bad time. House after house was burnt out.

In the north many bombs had fallen close to the S-Bahn station Pulitzerstrasse. Great devastation was found in the workers' residential districts in the direction of Siemensstadt. In the north-east many houses were damaged along Chausseestrasse and farther east in Weissensee—which suffered a hard blow in April and May 1943—as also in Pankow and Reinickendorf. The real eastern districts were relatively spared, apart from a number of bad hits in 1941 round Frankfurter Allee. Neu-Kölln was almost untouched, except for its western districts.

There are, of course, purely military targets in Berlin. But my impression was that these up to the spring of 1943 had not suffered much. Some factories were destroyed, and a considerable number of barracks were hit. Apart from that the main destruction comprised buildings of more indirect importance to the war and residential quarters.

The Germans, of course, maintained that the British and Americans were dropping bombs on civilian targets purposely. It is very difficult for a neutral observer to make up his mind on these matters. Studying the attacks, I often had the impression that the British fliers at least were very careful where they dropped their high-explosive bombs. On the other hand, incendiaries seemed to be scattered rather at random. It should be stressed that the attacks on Berlin had to be carried out in far from easy circumstances. The anti-aircraft guns were well distributed in and around the city. In order to prevent the batteries from being put out of action, they had sometimes been built into towers, the biggest of which was in Tiergarten, between the Zoo and Tiergarten S-Bahn stations. Strong squadrons of night fighters were based in the neighbourhood.

The Germans tried to render orientation more difficult by camouflage and dummy establishments. Their significance should, of course, not be exaggerated. The British knew about all the bigger establishments in detail, and new ones could not be constructed owing to shortage of material and man-power. For the same reason

the camouflage gradually crumbled away. But the 'dummy towns' erected in the north and the south of Berlin might explain the British reports that Potsdamer Bahnhof had been hit. It might have been a fake station in one of these dummy establishments. The time at the disposal of the attackers is limited. Berlin cannot, therefore, with existing resources, be bombed as systematically as has been the case with cities in Westphalia. Precision bombing of the capital also seems excluded.

The British mostly used medium high explosives and incendiaries. The phosphor bombs were particularly feared. They would flare up a week after they had been dropped and were difficult to extinguish. From time to time delayed-action bombs and air torpedoes were employed. A fantastic sight were the British flares as they slowly sank and lit up the whole city from above with a warm red glow.

Even if Berlin was far from experiencing what other German cities suffered, the attacks were no joke to live through. It might be a light attack, but bombs thudded down all the same. On the whole, Berlin's population stood up to the ordeals of the air raids with great courage.

Our house and shelter were much the same as others. It offered a good cross-section of the German people. Perhaps you learnt to know them best in the shelters. Down there their real nature showed through its protective cover. In the hour of peril the inhabitants are no longer Nazis or anti-Nazis, but human beings. In the shelters the real German people unveiled themselves with both their positive and negative qualities. It gave you a strong impression of the veneer which Nazism had managed to graft on to the Germans. The features of a whole people had been moulded into a mask. When the bombs droned down the mask lifted. When the "ack-ack" ceased fire the mask was there again. 'Normal' life was resumed.

### *Hitler Resumes Leadership: Peace Rumours*

Since Kharkov had been captured in March 1943 and the fighting in the East had died down there were signs of Hitler's resuming leadership. New pictures of him appeared in the papers. But it was unmistakable how deeply his authority as a *military* leader had

suffered. Hair-raising stories circulated about his interventions. These accounts had a common feature in stressing Hitler's interest in trifles combined with total indifference to formalities—he would give an order direct to a company or a battalion, overriding all higher officers, etc. A typical story was that of von Bock, who, asked by the world-famous conductor Furtwängler why he had been sacked gave the reply: "My dear Furtwängler, if the Führer had known how to play the mouth-organ you would have been dismissed as conductor." Hitler's reputation as an incompetent strategist was not improved by Colonel Scherff's coming once again into the open and attesting that the Führer was one of the greatest generals in history. Hitler had taken on the responsibility from "a feeling of duty," said the Colonel in his article. But if one read it attentively and disregarded the propaganda phrases it contained a good many interesting points.

During critical days, said the Colonel, Hitler was not cool and calm. He suffered too much with his soldiers for that. Nor did his temperament permit it. As Mommsen had once said, "No genius without passion." It was then not unnatural if "Hitler's passionate will to defeat a crisis had from time to time assumed passionate forms." It demanded human greatness and almost superhuman severity to enforce his will upon the wavering Eastern front. Destiny was not concerned with whether her chosen instrument complied with the normal conception of a strategist. A genius selected by destiny should not be "censured by petty criticism." "Destiny herself is his censor," Scherff finished. It would be difficult for a Nazi historian to come closer to the truth.

The celebration in memory of the fallen had for unknown reasons been postponed a week to the end of March. Hitler then appeared in public for the first time in months. He gave a strong impression of having aged. He spoke with marked gravity and deeper voice than usual. (This was observed by the German public, and the suggestion was even put forward that the speaker had not been Hitler but a deputy.)

The political scene was dominated by rumours of peace feelers and developments in South-east Europe, particularly in Turkey. There had been signs of peace moves from time to time. Schmidt certainly denied every one of them, reminding us that for Germany

"the word 'victory' must precede the word 'peace.'" But some of his colleagues made it understood that attempts at contacting the British directly had been made, yet had failed.

It was also apparent that the attempts to open a peace discussion via a third Power had negative results, although Spain, who had every reason of her own to be interested in a mediation, did not spare any efforts.

For a long time a separate peace with Russia seemed less impossible. The playing up of the Russian quisling, General Vlassov, during the spring of 1943, was associated by Berlin observers with endeavours in this direction. Well-informed sources maintained that the General commanded no less than 700,000 men, out of whom, however, only an insignificant fraction had been sent to the front. Vlassov appeared to be produced as a bargaining object. More important still was the Nazi staging of the Katyn incident. The discovery of the mass grave of Polish officers became a German propaganda feature surpassing any other in recent times.

It was, of course, grotesque to see the Germans in this case posing as the guardians of ethics. In point of fact, some observers gave as one explanation of the heavy thrumming on the propaganda drum the very necessity of forestalling the effects of possible Russian discoveries of Jewish mass graves in the recaptured territories.

Increased mistrust between the Allies was a factor on which the Germans counted for another move later on.

The political question which, apart from this, engaged most of Germany's attention during the spring was Turkey's attitude. After the Adana meeting early in the year the German Press had observed almost complete silence about Turkey. This was succeeded in mid-April by a marked garrulity. German newspapers, and in particular the *Essener Nationalzeitung*, which had a very good correspondent in Ankara, published reports about public feeling in Turkey almost every day. A certain line of policy was soon discernible.

The Turks' progressive orientation towards London was passed over lightly. More was said about British intrigues in Turkey, British attempts by means of a war of nerves to persuade Ankara to change their policy and to compromise Turkey in Germany's eyes by exaggerating the significance of the existing relations between

Britain and Turkey. But the Turks would not change their attitude, the German papers affirmed.

Gradually the tone sharpened. When the well-known Turkish paper, *Ulus*, published an article by the Member of Parliament, Esmer, in which it was stressed that the Germans had started the air war against big cities, the *Völkischer Beobachter* replied that this was turning the facts upside down and "a shameless impertinence."

Early in May a more serious attack was launched. Schmidt was having a *Stammtisch* evening in Fasanenstrasse and had announced in advance that Turkey was to be the subject of discussion. The members turned up to a man, and even non-members were greatly excited.

The evening was remarkable in many respects. A lecture was given by a member of the staff of the Slovak paper *Grenzbote*, who had just returned from Ankara. He declared that British and Americans had completely infiltrated into Turkey, that the Turkish will to resist was weak, but that it was still within their power to stop the Anglo-Saxons from going further—if necessary. Here Schmidt intervened with, "No, you are wrong there," and went on to explain to the amazed audience that Turkey had become "one single big British aerodrome," that the British had built roads, piled up supplies, and expanded in such a way that Turkey had become dominated by the Allies, militarily, politically, and economically. British ships had, Schmidt said, passed through the Dardanelles with foodstuffs and other supplies to the storehouses of the Black Sea. Turkey believed, Schmidt continued with great emphasis, that she was a 'subject' in high politics, but in point of fact the country was nothing but an 'object.' Ankara should have every interest in remaining neutral, but the Turks had apparently been confronted with British intimations that the only way for the Turks to keep Russian troops away from the Straits would be to permit entry to the British and Americans.

This was heavy guns, but still not content, Schmidt ostentatiously indulged in a lecture on the strength of the Bulgarian Army, which "was standing at the ready."

As late as 1942 an event of this kind would have been accompanied by an invitation to a dramatic Press conference at five o'clock on the following morning. Several of those present at the *Stammtisch* were expecting this. But it did not come off and perhaps the idea

was only to scare the Turks. The Turkish Embassy knew, of course, the following morning of everything that had taken place, and I soon found out that my Turkish colleague was equally well informed. Assuming that it was an attempt to frighten the Turks, the result hardly came up to expectations. The Turkish military attaché was said not to have concealed his opinion that the risk of a German attack was negligible.

It is, of course, not excluded that the whole affair really was the first stage of a campaign designed to develop into a military attack. The idea of attacking Turkey was old and had on several occasions been on the point of realization. Any such intention this time must, however, have been dropped fairly soon. Articles about Turkey in the German Press became increasingly scarce and gradually disappeared entirely.

For the rest, the spring of 1943 was rather uneventful. A complete lull reigned in the East. At the other fronts the Germans continued their preparations against an Allied invasion. Particular attention was attracted by the fact that the Franco-Spanish frontier was fortified at express speed; the Germans apparently feared that it might prove a weak point open to an Allied attack of the same kind as against North Africa.

Taken all in all, during the spring of 1943, Germany was completely passive and apparently gathering reserves for the trial of strength which, it was anticipated, would occur during the summer and autumn. When I left Berlin international circles there expected no large-scale German attack in the East but possibly a Russian summer offensive. It also seemed probable that the Allies would exploit their victory in Tunisia for an attack on Italy. The Germans faced this prospect with real anxiety.

### *Police, Party, and S.S.*

The National Socialist regime rested on two main pillars: the German police and the Party with its various organizations, above all the crack organization of the S.S.

The police were the strongest guarantee of the Nazi domination over the German people. It was already impressive by virtue of its size—at least 500,000 men. The home service was run on an

elaborate system of agents and cells. In all German circles of any significance Himmler had placed discreet observers and tale-bearers who, without revealing their identity, kept the police leaders informed of all changes of public feeling.

The police had, of course, extremely good assistance from the mammoth Party organization. But Himmler also tried to engage people outside the Party (in this respect by no means despising Jews). With the recruiting methods employed, he arrived at—to put it mildly—far-reaching results.

The police were equipped with all modern technical appliances. All sorts of outstanding experts were at their disposal, and special laboratories delivered drugs designed to make the most intractable talk. The police also carried supervision of foreigners to technical perfection.

Many foreigners refused to believe that “such things were possible” and had to pay dearly for their frivolity. They discovered too late that people whom they had considered their personal friends had reported every word of confidential conversations.

One of Himmler's most important assets was his enormous card index in which not only practically the whole German people were recorded, but almost all persons of any significance abroad, with the most intimate details fully noted down.

The leading principle of the Nazi police tactics was that a crime should be forestalled. This applied to all sorts of offences. I shall here confine myself to political crimes and to the particular task of supporting the Nazi regime, in other words, to the Secret State Police Department—“Geheime Staatspolizei”—abbreviated Gestapo. Its main preventative method was terrorism. An air of terror, torture, and medieval inquisition lay over the whole organization. Everything was done to underline this subtly. Arrests were preferably carried out by night or early in the morning. Those who did the job were taciturn and grim. No explanation was given. The arrested and his or her relatives were given the feeling that the victim might be brought directly to the gallows. Detained persons might be kept for weeks without even a cross-examination, and they were not arrested in the ordinary sense of the word, but sealed up in a hovel with perhaps forty other people, without the chance of fresh air or proper sleep and in unbelievably unhygienic conditions. The food was beyond description. The victims would be



unrecognizable after three or four weeks. Even concentration camps were said to be better than the Gestapo cages.

It was Gestapo policy to dispense with such respect as is shown by police forces in other European countries. A typical story was told in Vienna. Ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria had lived in Germany since 1918. The German Weimar Republicans treated him as a distinguished guest. After his son, Boris III, had made an intimate alliance with Germany one would have expected that she would show some deference to the old King, who after his abdication had taken no part in politics. But some time before Boris's death Duke Dietrichstein, a young relative of King Ferdinand, was arrested in the King's presence. When Ferdinand protested he received the scornful reply, "It's all the same to us whether you've been a King or not!" The old monarch informed his son of what had happened, and Dietrichstein was released after a strong intervention from Sofia. King Ferdinand received an apology.

But probably the Gestapo man who had made the arrest was promoted. For, to quote a person in contact with the Gestapo, "A thing like that puts the wind up people who think they are protected by their social position." This meant a great deal, particularly in Vienna.

When terror was not enough the Gestapo turned to provocation. You were often reminded of the Tsarist secret police. When the German police leaders felt that "something was brewing" in a district or within a group of the population they sent one of their men out with the task of organizing a conspiracy. The abscess was allowed to mature. Then one day the Gestapo struck and caught all the delinquents, except perhaps one or two. . . .

The German police also ran part of the espionage abroad. The military espionage was answerable to the armed forces, but the Gestapo was responsible for political espionage. One of its functions was to keep an eye on the Germans abroad, above all the German diplomats. They were watched carefully and had to guard their tongues. Some of their colleagues, their servants, or their secret informants, might be in the pay of the Gestapo.

On one or two occasions the German police even officially appointed a representative at a legation—I seem to remember that in Zagreb he was called "police attaché." But the real work was, of course, done invisibly.

In spite of its perfect organization the Gestapo was not infallible. Persons who mastered the technique foxed them repeatedly. From time to time high police officials or women who for years had been intimate with police chiefs were found to have been working for the British Secret Service. Himmler's methods of recruiting agents also brought to the organization many unreliable elements who sabotaged its activities as soon as they dared.

The National Socialist Party was not only the primary foundation of the regime but, through its special branches and above all the S.S., was part of the executive.

The N.S.D.A.P. was in fact a tremendous parallel organization to the State. Every State authority and activity had its counterpart within the Party. There were departments for foreign policy, cultural policy, race policy, and public health, justice, and economic policy. It also had its military organization, the Waffen-S.S.

Many had anticipated that this elaborate apparatus which Hitler had built up would replace the State organizations and constitute the State itself. This, however, was not to be the case. The State authorities remained, the key positions occupied by Party-men. But beside them was tolerated the strange duplicate of the State which the Nazi Party constituted. The consequences were often unreasonable. All proposals were referred both to the State authorities and the Party organization. Sometimes they paralysed each other, sometimes the Reich Chancellery stood up to the Party Chancellery, and the decision was left to Hitler in his capacity of both Party Leader and German Chief of State.

The administrative apparatus of the Party became a burden to the German State. The Party became a burden to the whole German society to an extent which it is difficult for an outsider to visualize. This is not least due to the double hierarchy involved in the regime. On the one hand, there is the social and economic hierarchy of the State, regulating, for example, the relations between a production manager and his foreman in a factory, between a landowner and his labourer, or between a chief of a German legation abroad and his messenger. But suddenly the order might be reversed if the foreman, the worker, and the messenger were 'higher in the Party.' They could then have authority over their chiefs, even in such a delicate field as the political.

An even bigger disadvantage than the incompetence was the corruption and servility which the system invited. A year ago an industrialist told me how his company gave big sums to the Party bosses among the factory personnel. That was cheaper, he said, than having them always making trouble, reporting the chief engineers for oppositionist political opinions or the production managers for lack of social conscience. "No, the Trade Union bosses were ten times better. They grasped that we couldn't go on fighting but had to fix up some sort of working conditions. And none of them would dream of dropping into my office during the worst rush, seating himself on my desk and dangling his legs and starting a provocative political discussion."

The leading Nazis looked upon Germany as their personal property. They exploited their power ruthlessly for their private purposes. They neither could nor wanted to make any distinction between public affairs and their own affairs. At the top this distinction was completely done away with. An examination of the private fortunes of the Nazi Party leaders would produce results similar to those revealed about the Italian Fascists. A foreigner was often amazed at the unceremonious methods by which Nazi leaders got hold of what pleased them and at the enormous corruption within the Party, particularly within the civil administration recruited from the Nazi Party of various occupied countries. You need not go farther than the conquered Polish districts of Warthegau and Danzig with West Prussia to find the Reich Governors and their relatives in possession of vast lands, factories, and other enterprises. Farther east it becomes worse. Generalkommissar Kube in Minsk, earlier dismissed from his post for fraud, sent home caravans of goods from his district. One of his kinsmen was detained at the frontier because he had brought a big bag of jewellery partly collected from the churches of the district. But when it turned out that the 'transport' was travelling on behalf of Kube he was released with many apologies. At most Kube was warned to be a little more careful.

The Party is, of course, not entirely a 'nest of corruption and bad morals.' Every Party member was not corrupt. There were still tens of thousands of men and women working with great self-sacrifice within the Party for what they considered an ideal. Conservative German observers who opposed the system admitted without reserve that the huge machine had done a great deal of good in several fields,

particularly the N.S.V. (Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt), the large organization for social health which devoted itself above all to children and mothers.

But opportunity makes thieves, and the opportunities of the Party members were frequent and tempting. The big national collections provided such opportunities. Serious abuses were revealed from time to time. Now and then an example was set by one or two death sentences. But as a rule the sinners went scot-free. People who had given fine leather gloves for the soldiers later recognized them on some group leader in their own district. Another one suddenly met a Party official wearing the fur cap he had sacrificed for the Eastern front, etc.

All this caused tremendous bitterness among the broad masses of the German people. The Party representatives were in a delicate position since they had very often made their career by criticizing the corruption of their political opponents (which, of course, had existed, but was on a far more modest scale than in the Third Reich).

The leading figure in one of the stories which recently damaged the reputation of the Party considerably was the S.A. Chief of Staff Viktor Lutze. At the beginning of May 1943 he had gone on a pleasure trip by car with his family and was on his way back to Berlin when a pedestrian crossed the Autobahn. Lutze's son, who was driving at high speed, tried to swerve, with the result that the car skidded and turned round. Lutze was seriously wounded and died on the following night.

Public anger was roused not because the trip had been made in an official car, but because the people who gathered round after the accident found the Autobahn dotted with geese, hams, parcels of butter, and eggs.

The Germans hate nothing so much as *die Partei*. The stories about it are innumerable. "Es geht alles vorüber, es geht alles vorbei," sang the entire German people, until it was forbidden, because many went on: "Zuerst fällt der Führer und dann die Partei." ("Everything passes, everything comes to an end," and then "First falls the Führer and then the Party.")

The old Nazi organization for the protection of meetings, Sturm-Abteilung (S.A.), gradually grew into a political militia. But after June 30, 1934, the S.A. was deprived of all real political significance

and its main function was reduced to the preservation of the traditions of the Party. The S.A. appeared mostly in a purely decorative capacity at Party funerals and on similar occasions; a large proportion of their numbers had been called up at the outbreak of the war. The S.A. had only one military unit of their own, the Feldherrnhalle regiment. Its task was to uphold the tradition from the "Bürgerbräukeller" plot in 1923.

The Schutz-Staffel (S.S.) took an opposite course. Originally a crack guard within the S.A., it was segregated from the mother organization after June 30, 1934, and rapidly developed during the following years into garrison units employed in police duties.

In the beginning the S.S. had various functions. The underlying idea was the creation not only of a personal bodyguard for Hitler, but of a crack organization. This was done by a careful selection of the most able men, thus constituting a forcing-house for new leaders. As early as 1932 S.S. men were prohibited from marrying without the consent of their superiors, and from that time the Aryan pedigrees of their prospective wives were studied with utmost care before such consent was given. The S.S. wives were made members of *die Sippe* (clan).

A special duty of the S.S. was to preserve and strengthen Germanity. There were for long honest elements within the organization who took the slogan "Germanic communion" seriously.

These elements, however, had no influence on the Germanic policy of the Nazis. It was run by others who wanted to bless the Germanic brotherhood with a perfected German Gestapo regime. As time went on the S.S. became the principal exponent of that regime.

Talking to S.S. men you often got the impression that they were naïve enough to hope to be able to 'win' the small Germanic peoples for their policy, although they must have been aware of the fact that this policy was mainly characterized by the salvos of the execution squads. One might define their attitude as sheer Machiavellianism. Yet I had the impression that they often imagined that they were acting justly towards the Dutch and the Norwegians, for example. "Of course we don't stand for any shilly-shallying. Those who are with Britain risk their necks. But we hope that the Dutch"—or it might be the Norwegians, the Danish, or the Flemish—"people will understand our policy and realize the necessity of fighting on our

side for the West against the barbarians of the East." This was what I was told repeatedly. It may have been pure cynicism, but many S.S. men appeared, in their one-sidedness and immaturity, to believe in their idea of the rigorous but just treatment of occupied countries and in their own martyrdom of having to fight, misunderstood and alone, the great danger from the East.

The S.S. men have much on their conscience. Their units were used to deport the Jews from Germany. In carrying out this job they developed an almost unbelievable brutality. Yet it was nothing compared with their deeds in the East. It will perhaps never be possible to state how many lives of Jews, Poles, and Russians they accounted for. The number of executed Jews in any case surpasses two millions, and at least one million Poles have been killed for certain. I have heard no figures of how many Russian prisoners of war and Russian civilians they have done away with.

Out of Lithuania's 250,000 Jews, 25,000 remained in the autumn of 1942. I do not know if any of them are still alive. Nor are there many Jews left in the Ukraine, while several hundred thousands still live in the Generalgouvernement and Wartheland. In Lodz alone there are some 150,000 at the time of writing.

Many Jews took part in the fighting as partisans, saboteurs, and so forth. But that is no excuse for the cold-blooded mass murder, the ruthless extermination.

The mass slaughter was carried out by methods which are difficult to describe in print. Sometimes men, women, and children were collected, made to dig their own graves, and then mown down by machine-guns. On other occasions gas was used in special chambers or trains. In yet other cases the victims had to goose-step through an aperture in a wall where a soldier fired a bullet through the head of each person.

Before leaving this chapter a few words may be said about how knowledge of the S.S. methods seeped out.

The members of the execution squads in the East were carefully chosen. They were recruited from the most brutal elements and gradually trained to increased insensibility. To begin with they were perhaps ordered to collect Jews for street work, snow-shovelling, etc. Gradually they were made to undertake odd executions in ordinary execution platoons. Only after that were they employed in mass executions.

Many refused to do the job and were either shot or if they were lucky sent home with detailed information of what would happen to them and their relatives if they revealed anything. Others had nervous breakdowns and were taken to lunatic asylums. Even the most hardy had a collapse from time to time. It happened repeatedly that a doctor had to be summoned to soldiers on leave because of hysterical attacks, sleeplessness, or delirium tremens (the soldiers in the execution squads used to get drunk before the job, and many were constantly intoxicated). It was always the same story. "I can't stand it any longer—I see nothing but blood in my dreams," said a young Austrian soldier to his doctor. In this way a number of full reports of the ghastly proceedings got out. Sometimes an outsider also happened to be an eyewitness of the mass executions and managed to get away. There were even photographs which told everything.

It seems as if the S.S., in its capacity of instrument for this terrifying policy, had carried it further than was even intended by leading Nazi circles. That is, however, difficult to state definitely. One thing is certain—the German public had only a faint idea of what was taking place.

The S.S. military units, the *Waffen-S.S.*, were raised at the beginning of the war as a special praetorian guard of the Nazi regime. Its kernel was the well-drilled and exclusively equipped S.S. *Verfügungstruppen*—"Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler," "Germania," and "Der Führer." Round these were grouped volunteers, and this voluntary character has been maintained officially, although in actual fact it remained only on paper. The *Waffen-S.S.* soldiers were mainly recruited from the Hitlerjugend.

Gradually the organization swelled into a substantial part of the Wehrmacht, although not commanded by Wehrmacht generals but by its own commanders, answerable directly to Hitler. The *Waffen-S.S.* was always Hitler's special favourite and was given all sorts of privileges. From time to time S.S. units were allowed to pluck the laurels after Wehrmacht troops had done the donkey work. When the generals had an opportunity to employ the S.S. units properly they of course did so, and then the losses were often tremendous. On the other hand, it must be admitted that S.S. troops often showed a special go-ahead spirit, and that their leaders, above all Sepp Dietrich and Theodor Eicke, really carried out many difficult tasks.

The S.S. men looked upon themselves as political soldiers (they also absorbed the volunteers from various countries) and did not conceal that they considered themselves superior to the Wehrmacht. Their privileged position caused a bitterness within the armed forces which must have had unfavourable effects on the German conduct of the war.

### *The German People and Nazism*

Hitler's movement cannot be explained simply as an indirect consequence of the Treaty of Versailles but must be considered as a manifestation of fundamental aspects of the German character. If that were not the case Nazism would never have come to power. The German national character undoubtedly shows destructive features which in Nazism were driven to a head and which are based on what briefly could be called the Prussian spirit. On the other hand, the German people have a number of constructive qualities which rightly put them in the first line among the civilized nations.

The problem which the dual face of Germany presents has not asserted itself only in our times. The German people are split by many fissures. Alongside the unbending Prussian tendency towards centralization there is wide scope for a separatism which might seem dead for the moment, but which is growing beneath the surface. "*Die Kleinstaaterei*" is a typical German phenomenon.

It was perhaps inevitable, but certainly a misfortune, that the centre of gravity of the united German State was located in North Germany and Berlin. No one could deny the competence and efficiency of the North Germans. Unhappily, these qualities are combined with others less pleasant—above all, a total inability to get on with other peoples. A South German, a Bavarian, a Swabian, or a Rhinelander rarely evokes such antipathy as does a North German almost automatically when visiting a foreign country. The people of South Germany and West Germany are lacking in Prussian efficiency and the exacting tradition of Frederick the Great, but have in return much more charm and good-heartedness.

The victory of Nazism placed the leadership definitely in Berlin. Bavaria could, as late as 1934, have put an end to Nazism. The Reichswehr there wanted to strike before the Nazi infiltration had been completed, and their rebellion would have been supported by a strong majority of the population. The Bavarians placed their



hopes on Crown Prince Rupprecht of Wittelsbach. But the Crown Prince refused to act, since a Bavarian intervention against Nazism would have brought about a dissolution of the unity of the Reich. The plan of revolt had then to be abandoned. Nazism was victorious, and its victory became a victory for Berlin and a defeat for Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and even for Dresden, Cologne, and Hamburg.

Since then Hitler has done his best to quash separatism. And everything else in society which might have balanced Nazism was eliminated. The aged Reichspresident was put out of the game, the Reichswehr and the Prussian junkers were compelled to accept Hitler, and so were the big financiers and industrialists. The bourgeoisie was undermined, the Church was pushed back, the whole society was *gleichgeschaltet*, and the labour organizations fell into the hands of the Nazis. Not only bourgeois Germany, but Social Democrats and Communists failed completely to rise to the occasion. In a few years that uniform façade was created which has since presented itself to the world as the Third Reich.

How this happened cannot be explained without emphasizing that before Hitler's assumption of power only a few had any conception of what Nazism really meant. Most people looked upon it as a strong nationalist movement with an intensive social philosophy which would, under the pressure of circumstances, soon turn evolutionist and abandon its revolutionary ideas. Hitler and his men managed in a masterly way to camouflage their real purpose during the long years of advance towards power. Besides, Nazism only assumed its definite character after 1933. It was the mentality of the leaders which decided this character.

Rauschning has rightly predicted that Adolf Hitler and his men will go down in history as the big nihilists. The Nazis tried to change the whole basis of the life of the German nation. The German people were certainly secularized to a large extent before Hitler came to power, and indifference towards religion was rather on the increase than the reverse. Yet the ethical basis of society was undoubtedly Christian, and even the religiously indifferent were largely guided by norms common to Christian civilization.

Hitler tried to give the German people a new religion. This was never frankly stated, nor did it seem to represent an unbroken line

in Nazi ideology. But, looking back on Nazi policy throughout the last ten years, it appears obvious that a large-scale effort was launched to curb the Christianity of the German people as representing their last barricade against National Socialist nihilism.

An attempt was made to keep the youth away from the churches and give them something new to believe in. Hitler has been said to consider himself a Messiah, and worshipping his person in some quarters assumed the form of a real cult. But this was only a superficial phenomenon. What was inoculated into the German youth was rather Nature worship, a gospel of blood, strength, and Germanity.

About a year ago a book appeared in Germany which, I think, is one of the most interesting manifestations of this new religion, or rather this attempt to replace Christianity with something else. Its title was *Gott und Volk—God and People*—and was written by a young anonymous S.S. man.

"The object of our faith," said the author,

is Germany, for whom we cherish not the lukewarm half-hearted love which is being preached in the churches, but a blind, fervent love which does not know of any limits or any reservations. Our path to God does not pass through the Bible and Jerusalem, it passes through Germany.

No reform of the Church avails us. We desire a faith growing out of the depths of the German essence, the German heart. A faith which suits Germans as the Teutoburger Forest, the North Sea, and the silent heath.

The German religion shall be soldierly. The fronts are clear. The one is called Christ, the other is Germany. . . . The issue to-day is not to weaken Catholicism in order to strengthen Protestantism. The issue is to replace a religion, which is alien to our nature, with a faith born in the depths of the German soul.

Christianity is an artificial religion, a cleverly and coldly calculated invention by the priests who prey on the stupidity and innocence of man. He who fights for the existence of the German Reich has the duty of rooting out the religious creeds, not faith in God. Our task is to cast out all foreign trash, to put an end to the dream of the paradise of the angels and to return to earth. Whether we call the Ultimate God, Light, Providence, or Original Power makes no difference. The essential thing is that we do not say Judah, nor Rome, but Germany.

We want no reward in the shape of a life without sorrow after death.

That is liberalistic, Jewish mercenariness. No! Work, fight, and believe in your people! Do not ask for reward, nor care about your life. Ask: How can I serve my people?

German piety recognizes the divine laws and the laws of Nature as a revelation and lets life and faith be guided by them. We must listen to the language of Nature, to the genuine and original. We Germans have been called upon by destiny to be the first to break with Christianity. That will be our glory.

We do not want to indulge in hairsplitting about God. He is, was, and will be eternally. We believe in the God, the origin of all reality, the secrecy of all life who reveals Himself in the eternal generation and extinction in Nature. We do not derive our faith from books or empty commands. We create it out of daily life, out of the experience of people and history, out of race and blood, out of the earth of our native place.

The suffering pain-wracked figure of the Crucified must go. Our heroes must carry swords in their hands, not a cross on their backs. We have respect for Christ. But we do not love him, and we do not want him as our leader.

Christianity cannot be a soldier's goal. 'Pagan' is therefore a title of honour. Besides, it is the same to us whether we be called heretics or pagans if only we are good Germans. If we are to have a creed it should be: "I believe in the strong God and in Germany."

Our attitude must be heroic, forthright, and brave. For only the hero vanquishes the world. The humble avoids it. Love, therefore, must not determine our lives. We need stern laws, for life is stern. The soldier does not go to heaven. He is a sinner. But he becomes one with the immortality of his people. He is a man, and it is men we need. The greatest of all evil is cowardice. The Edda songs have taught us that. Live faithfully, fight with contempt of death, die laughing!

The Supreme is, for the peoples and for men, glory. Love shall work as a force of the heart, but not love for our neighbour. We do not love our enemies. We respect them if they deserve it, but we scorn the false, the mean, and the cowardly. He who only loves is cowardly or unrealistic. We shall hate out of a pure heart all our enemies, everything half-hearted and lukewarm, everything cowardly and alien which preys upon our souls. We shall hate everything low and evil which daily tempts us to shirk all difficulties for a life of peace and enjoyment.

In the last chapter of his book the author defined the calling of the followers of "the German faith."

We shall keep the religious creed away from the youth and educate our children as if they had never heard of Christianity. We shall take them out into Nature and show them God's miracle. We shall teach them our holy history and awake in them pride and consciousness of being the sons of a great people.

I have quoted this book at some length as it gives an unusually clear idea of what Nazism has set out to achieve with the youth—a new ideology, a martial religion glorifying inflexibility, masculinity.

Its language is uniquely frank. It tells, in words perhaps too clear, the intentions of the Nazi youth leaders. These intentions were otherwise seldom openly pronounced. The Nazis preferred to *act*. But the worship of sternness and strength pleaded by the author was representative of wide circles of the German youth of *to-day*. That should not be forgotten.

Even youths from families which have tried as far as possible to give their children a different attitude towards life have been strongly influenced by that gospel. I once met a German boy who was a convinced opponent of the system and discussed politics with a rather frightening precocity. He explained to me that the oppositionists—numerous already because youth is oppositionist by instinct—within the Hitlerjugend and the Labour Front had only one weapon with which to defend themselves: to be yet sterner than those surrounding them, to observe constantly the greatest caution, to disguise themselves and use craft. "You will be surprised to know," he said, "that the biggest Hitler enthusiasts in my group are the leaders of the opposition." "How do you know?" I asked. "Because I am one of them," was the reply.

Unfortunately I met relatively few young boys and girls during my stay in Germany. The main reason for this was that there were only very few of them left in Berlin. But as far as my information goes this young man's attitude is very common among German youth of *to-day*. No outsider could gauge, however, what they really think of their country and its future. During all these years they have been drilled physically and fed with propaganda. They know nothing, or practically nothing, about the world outside Germany, about other nations' faith and ideals. They lack the most elementary

prerequisites in the way of knowledge to build themselves a realistic picture of the situation.

The attitude of the German youth is one of the greatest dangers to both Germany and Europe. Not that it would prevent an internal collapse of Nazism when the time is ripe. But others will reap what Hitler has sown. It may take generations to root the consequences of Nazism out of the German mind.

Alongside the endeavours to create a new religious foundation, a systematic disintegration of the old judicial system has gone on. In spite of all that has been talked and written about this, it seems as if the outside world still does not quite understand what it means in practice. Germany has reached a stage which could be compared with the Interregnum of 1254-73, infamous in history. It is both theoretically and practically possible that good citizens and impeccable men are arrested and executed within the space of a few hours without even a pretence at trial and verdict. More than this—they can be murdered in their homes. Is it realized what this means to a nation which has been counted among the foremost civilized peoples?

Brutality, servility, sham, and corruption have triumphed. The notions of honour have been blown to pieces, and disloyalty and informing have replaced faithfulness and honesty.

Millions of Germans have responded in the same way as other Europeans to the manifestations of the Hitlerite policy. But few have dared to come into the open with their protests. This may perhaps be characterized as lack of civilian courage. Certainly many in whom one would have expected to find such courage have proved to be without it. But it should also be remembered what it means to raise a voice in a State like Nazi Germany. To carry out opposition is to risk one's own life and the lives of one's family and relatives—even more than in an occupied country. Many have, of course, used this as an excuse for their cowardice. But many have spoken their mind and had to spend years in a concentration camp or found a last home in a police grave for people shot "during attempts to escape."

The German people of to-day are *sick*. They have ten years of Nazi regimentation behind them, of systematic anæsthetization and isolation from the outside world. The problem of the responsibility for Hitler's foreign policy is complicated by the fact that the German

nation is an invalid. Neither should it be forgotten that the malady has for a long time proved to be contagious. Of course, we can ask: Why did the German people not throw off Hitler's regime but allow themselves to be intoxicated by the successes, and accept Nazism as their price? The question is, however, whether during the years when it must have been clear to all balanced Germans what Nazism involved there was any actual possibility of getting rid of Hitler and his men.

The Germans of to-day are indeed in a terrible pass. Many of them know that a German victory would mean an unbearable strait-jacket for themselves and other peoples. They cannot, therefore, wholeheartedly wish for a German victory. But then there is a tragic conflict of conscience. It has been hammered into them that he who does not believe fanatically in the Führer is a traitor, and that National Socialism is *Germany*. Moreover, those who have experienced 1918 know what it means to be disarmed and exposed to enemy arbitrariness. They realize, too, that this time things might be sevenfold worse. The German people have begun to feel the heat of hatred that smoulders under the ashes throughout Europe and the threat from all the peoples of Europe—the Europe they wanted to unite *with* Germany, but which Nazism has united *against* Germany. They feel, too, the pressure of the Slav advance and the latent danger of the millions of foreign workers among them. They feel that they must play the game to its finish. Is there any way out except fighting? The Allies have, in point of fact, not given the German people any alternative but complete surrender. It is difficult for a people to accept such an alternative before the military situation has become catastrophic. *Actually the situation and Germany's adversaries are whipping the Germans together under the swastika.* "Victory or Bolshevism" has become Goebbels' slogan. That is his way of telling the German people that there is no third alternative. The Nazis in any case know that their own fight is literally a fight of life and death.

Nazism has embodied certain aspects of the German national character and nurtured them for ten years. But has Nazism succeeded in exterminating the other Germany?

Besides the masses which have been caught in the Nazi strait-jacket there are millions of Germans fighting for something better. The other Germany is not completely annihilated. It has suffered

damage which it will take decades to repair. Those who want to do the repairs should not be left to their fate.

### *The Opposition*

All opposition in Germany is revolutionary and compelled to work underground. What has been said above about the Gestapo is enough to give an idea of the difficulties the opposition is faced with even in solving the most elementary technical problems. An oppositionist in the Third Reich must be constantly on his guard against treason and provocation.

The first requisite for an anti-Nazi group is access to *information* about the actual situation. In this respect associations which can exploit, in one way or another, an information agency officially working for State authority or other legal institution, have a great advantage.

Espionage on the leading men of the regime is particularly important. It yields excellent material for whispering propaganda.

The next problem is to maintain contact between members of the group. This is hard enough in view of postal and telephone censorship and the almost total embargo on civilian travel. The military are here in a more favourable position—officers on missions may easily bring verbal or even written instructions to other parts of the country. There are proofs of the opposition having been able to use the military courier mail and thus avoid the Gestapo.

Propaganda demands the most meticulous preparations. The smallest lapse might jeopardize the whole result. Leaflets may be printed in secret presses. To have them made by an ordinary printer is simpler but dangerous since every printing press is under special police inspection. You may, of course, stencil or hectograph leaflets. But the results are accordingly.

Then there is the problem of distribution. The best method is perhaps to post the leaflets through mail-boxes, but traps are arranged from time to time by the police. The opposition must, however, employ all possible media. A popular method was to put leaflets in newspapers or match-boxes and leave them behind.

The verbal propaganda against the regime was more important than leaflets. It was highly developed and obviously systematically organized. Indiscretions were often spread throughout a town in a

few hours. An inexhaustible source for the oppositionist propaganda was the private lives of Nazi bosses.

Radio propaganda could be very effective. There were quite a number of secret radio stations in Germany and the occupied countries. The best-known was "Gustaf Siegfried I" and the "Wehrmachtssender," which in their attacks on the Party exploited both the finest subtleties of the German language and its heaviest guns. The Wehrmachtssender proved extremely well informed on the most intimate affairs of the Party leaders. Lately the so-called "Atlantik" has made an appearance. It addresses itself to the submarine crews.

The oppositionist radio stations would disappear for some time and then reappear on another wavelength and at other hours. Their broadcasts were usually very short in order to render their location more difficult. Yet it is a puzzle how they managed to exist at all. The most peculiar theories were put out in explanation. One station, for example, was thought to be installed on a barge which kept slowly moving about on the German canals. Some of them were probably protected by military authorities or units or similar bodies difficult to lay hands on—otherwise one cannot see how they could carry on month after month and even for years.

Many things have happened lately in Germany which would surprise foreigners. An illegal traffic of considerable proportions has been going on. In the autumn of 1942 it was estimated by experts that there were 150,000 persons without legal status. Since then the number must have increased. Some of these people are Jews, but the main bulk are non-Jewish Germans hostile to the regime. They live with friends and relatives, constantly on the alert against the Gestapo. Many have benefited from the chaos in administration caused by air attacks and evacuation. But it is a miracle how they have managed to solve the food problem, since many must be without ration cards. Part of the explanation is the black market. Others have forged credentials.

It was not particularly difficult to get hold of a foreign passport. Several centres for passport falsification were in operation, and the twelve million foreign labourers offered rich opportunities for the clever and unscrupulous.

Sabotage within the administration explains a good deal. Oppositionists were to be found everywhere—even in Himmler's organization. There was also considerable opposition within the Party. It



was stimulated by the change in the general situation. There were many who wanted to buy their future existence through services to the opposition. What to do with the Nazis will be one of the most difficult post-war problems. Masses of members have been *Parteigenossen* (Party members) only in name, and many were literally forced into the Party. But when the regime collapses we shall witness the phenomenon that nobody was ever a Nazi by conviction.

In view of the mentality of Nazi Germany a macabre show is to be expected. As early as 1942 one could hear people say, "Of course, I was never really a Nazi." These were the same people who in 1941 had been ardent Hitler followers, both officially and in private. For the leaders there is no way out. It would hardly help Goebbels if he now turned communist. Goebbels is a man with a diseased hatred of bourgeois society, a spiritual proletarian. The Germans distinguish between *der Proletarier*—the working-class man, the proletarian in the literal sense of the word—and *der Prolet*—the man who is spiritually clad in rags. Dr Goebbels belongs to the latter category.

All the tricks of the Nazis will probably be in vain. If there is anything which those who have been in hiding or carried on opposition against the regime have learned during these years then it is to distinguish the sheep from the goats. We will, one of them said to me, put a questionnaire before every person of any importance and two of the questions will be: "Were you in a concentration camp? If not, why?"

Nothing could be more difficult to judge than the strength and character of the opposition against Nazism. The majority of the German people want to be liberated from the regime. The main bulk is anti-Nazi and wants to get rid of the Party and attain peace. Millions of exhausted Germans want nothing but rest, sleep, and their private lives undisturbed. Only a minority know what they want instead of Hitler.

Four large groups, each containing hundreds of factions, could be discerned within the real political opposition: the Monarchists, the Liberals, the moderate Left or the Social Democrats, and the Communists. The boundaries between them are fluid. Each contains innumerable action groups with or without mutual connexion.

To these must be added three institutions of direct political

significance which, it can be anticipated, may survive the deluge: the Churches, above all the Roman Catholic Church, the German high finance, in particular the Rhineland-Westphalian finance group, and the armed forces.

The *Austrian* opposition against Nazism has its special character. I have already dealt with the confrontation of Austrians and Germans from the Reich and its unfavourable repercussions from the Nazi point of view. The Nazis did their best to create a *German* national consciousness and originally had the upper hand over the "Christian-Socials" under Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, who wanted to create an *Austrian* national consciousness, but had nothing more to base it upon than the small Austrian post-war state.

Five years of German Nazism have changed the situation and brought about a renaissance of the idea of Austria. Many Austrians have got down to pondering the problem: "Are we the same people as the Germans?" Their experience has made them inclined to think that language alone does not constitute a people.

This development is yet only in its initial stage. But those who want an Austria freed from the tie with Germany already appear a considerable majority. The Nazis have perhaps 10 to 15 per cent. of the population behind them. Then there is another group of perhaps equal strength which is anti-Nazi but not unconditionally hostile to the Anschluss. The rest are in favour of "away from Berlin."

The clergy of the Protestant churches have shown great courage and endurance in the fight for freedom of conscience. But the Catholic Church, in our traditional conception the home of spiritual and political reaction, has marched at the head of this fight. It has been easier for the Catholics to hold their line since they are firmly anchored outside Germany. The Catholics have been in a position to influence the German policy via the Quirinal in Rome, which has intervened on several occasions at the request of the Vatican. The Catholics have also been financially stronger than their Protestant brethren and retained a far firmer grip on their followers than they.

The differences between Catholicism and Protestantism should, however, not be exaggerated in this connexion—many barriers have fallen under the common pressure. Protestant clergymen have been preaching in Catholic churches and even been supported by the funds

which the Nazis have so far been unable to seize from the Roman Catholic Church.

With its close-knit organization the Catholic Church has succeeded in saving a good deal of German civilization and spiritual freedom from the voracious appetite of the National Socialist Party. Catholicism has also derived the greatest advantage from the religious renaissance noticeable throughout Germany. Leading Protestants have drawn nearer to Catholicism, and it is not too much to talk of a landslide in its favour. The Catholic churches are full, and people stand in the streets to celebrate mass.

The Roman Church has even politically won a goodwill which will certainly play a significant part after the war. The main reason for this is the frank and daring attitude of several of its most prominent leaders. Count Galen's sermons in Münster have exercised a great influence. Copies of them have been circulated from hand to hand throughout Germany. And Münster Cathedral has been crowded. The Gestapo dared not interfere in spite of the Bishop's outspoken language. At one period, when Galen's arrest was expected at any time, neighbouring farmers came to town in their carriages every morning and made the Bishop appear in order to prove that he was still there and not in a concentration camp.

Innumerable tales were current about this man. Many of them may be true, but whether or not is of minor importance, as their very existence gives a striking picture of the situation.

One of the most familiar stories tells of the Nazi boss who rose from his seat in church and roared that those who made no contribution to Germany's fight with their own or their children's flesh and blood should hold their tongues. The Bishop's reply came like lightning: "I forbid anyone in this church to criticize the Führer!"

Similar stories were current about many other priests. All Germany knew about Cardinal Schulte in Cologne, who had spoken of "the lie which is limping through Germany." When he was summoned to the Gestapo to explain what he meant by insulting the Minister of Propaganda (Goebbels limps slightly) he replied with surprise and indignation that as far as he was concerned he had had the devil in mind.

The Catholic Bishop of Berlin, Count Konrad Preysing, is yet another who has spoken up. Soon after the outbreak of the German-Russian war a Pastoral letter from him was read out in all Berlin's

Catholic churches in which he stated that, if a German Catholic was confronted with the choice between his Fatherland and his faith, then he must choose faith. Furthermore, the letter listed a number of State measures as interfering with Catholicism and constituting a menace to its existence. Many of Bishop Preysing's other sermons were conspicuous demonstrations. Those present on June 28, 1942, at the celebration of the Pope's twenty-fifth anniversary as a Bishop, in the later destroyed Hedwigskirche will not forget it. The church was packed, and a big crowd was waiting outside. The Bishop arrived in his carriage, drawn by white horses, and was greeted with a threefold "Heil" for "Our Bishop" and another threefold "Heil" for the "Holy Father in Rome." Preysing, clad in his sumptuous bishop's robe, was met at the entrance by a procession of priests. In his sermon, received with deep emotion, he said that justice could only rest on that principle of the human heart: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." "Life is sacred," the Bishop continued, "whether it be an unborn child or an infirm old person. The justice which is anchored in God cannot be replaced by a justice of the State."

The Church will certainly play a great part when it comes to replacing National Socialism with a new ideology for the German people. The sharp lines of difference of a few years no longer exist. Bourgeois, Social Democrats, and perhaps even Communists sit together in the church pews. But the political goodwill of the Catholic Church is a brittle asset, and it is difficult to anticipate how much it will mean after the war. It is too early to forecast the creation of a new party of the same type as the pre-Nazi Zentrum.

German high finance has also begun to oppose the regime, but cannot get away from its share in the responsibility for the Nazi assumption of power. The line of reasoning in Fritz Thyssen's book is not unusual in the German business world. Like him most German financiers have closed their accounts with Nazism. But so far they have remained cautiously in their positions and refrained from political initiative. In spite of their responsibility for development it is fairly safe to assume that high finance will survive Hitler. Many German business-men still maintain their international contacts; the various groups are firmly organized, give each other mutual support, and will still represent a power after the fall of the Nazi system. They have to be reckoned with as one of the strongest

organized stabilizing factors. They have an excellent information service at their disposal and a good general view of the muddle of German war economy.

Another important factor is the Wehrmacht. Since the birth of Nazism it has been expected both inside and outside Germany that the Wehrmacht would intervene and, in one way or another, bring about a liquidation of the Nazi system. But the years have passed without more than faint signs of political initiative from the side of the military.

The Reichswehr could doubtless have overthrown Hitler as late as one or two years after 1933. But the Reichswehr officers did not want to smash a power which in their eyes was the only one capable of carrying out a German rearmament. Besides, they were on the whole unwilling to intervene in the political sphere, which was alien to them. Hitler knew what he was doing when he had von Schleicher shot. He was a political general, but there were few of his sort. After Nazism had been at work for some time there were none.

German officers are known for their loyalty and sense of duty. Certainly many of them, particularly the regular officers and those officers in the reserve who belonged to monarchist families, have for years been extremely bitter against the regime and particularly against its military exponent, the Waffen-S.S. The fact that it has not come to a rebellion is perhaps as much due to the German officers' lack of political initiative as to Himmler's skill in isolating and controlling the most dangerous oppositionist elements. He has above all—supported by Hitler's own sensitiveness in these matters—made sure that no officer reached a position in public opinion which made it possible for him to raise the standard of rebellion. As soon as somebody has threatened to do so other less prominent generals have been pushed in the foreground. It was not by hazard that a number of Field-M Marshals were appointed simultaneously in 1940.

At one time it looked as if one man would obtain a paramount position—Rommel. But he is an uncompromising friend of the new regime and as such less dangerous. Moreover, he was in Africa. Rommel had a grip on his troops beyond comparison in the German Wehrmacht, and the Afrika Korps would certainly have followed their leader even if he had given the order "To Berlin!"

Hitler was remarkably careful with all awards as long as Rommel's star was at the zenith. When it began to decline the policy changed.

It is also symptomatic that when Rommel's reputation was at its climax the German people shook their heads and said meaningly, "Pray that nothing happens to him—that he is not sent to the Eastern front, for example."

From time to time another general, Field-Marshal von Manstein, seemed to be on the verge of obtaining a unique position in the East. Good military critics regard him as Germany's most outstanding soldier. He has repeatedly intervened in the East and cleared up seemingly hopeless situations caused by the dilettante at the top. But nobody knows so far whether von Manstein is capable enough and willing to take Germany's fate in his hands.

The German Wehrmacht has not proved a suitable instrument for political activity. The generals have as a rule confined themselves to warding off the worst blunders. But a situation might arise when the higher officers feel it their duty to act. This situation is perhaps already in the offing.

# X

## THE LAST ACT

### *Germany's Strength*

THE GERMAN ARMED FORCES STILL INSPIRE RESPECT. AT THE TIME OF writing they probably comprise about 295 divisions and a total number of men approaching eleven millions. But only about half is to be considered as the Army proper. Nobody except the experts knows, of course, anything about the distribution in detail of the German forces. But an amateur sketch may perhaps be allowed in order to give some idea of the approximate proportions. Such a sketch might roughly look as follows:

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| 270 infantry and light divisions of 15,000 men each   | 4,050,000  |
| 25 armoured divisions of 8,000 men each   | 200,000    |
| Army troops (heavy artillery, specialist troops)  | 250,000    |
| Ersatzheer (reserves in the homeland for replacing losses)                                  | 1,000,000  |
| Anti-aircraft (apart from field units)  | 1,000,000  |
| Police troops (apart from ordinary civil police)  | 500,000    |
| Garrison troops (older reservists)  | 500,000    |
| Air Force   | 900,000    |
| Navy  | 250,000    |
| Coastal Artillery   | 150,000    |
| Army service troops, O.T. (Organization Todt),<br>Labour Front                              | 2,000,000  |
|   | <hr/>      |
|   | 10,800,000 |
| Bulgarian Army, 30 divisions, etc.  | 650,000    |
| Rumanian Army, about 25 divisions, etc. (out of<br>which more than half under organization) | 600,000    |
| Slovak Army   | 100,000    |
| Croat troops  | 100,000    |
| Italian fascists  | 50,000     |
| Volunteers from various countries   | 20,000     |
|   | <hr/>      |
|   | 1,520,000  |

The fighting quality of the German units is still undoubtedly high. The morale has certainly deteriorated and, in particular, the authority of the Supreme Commander. Yet it is too early to talk of a noteworthy loosening up of discipline. The German officers still seem to have their troops under control. The German armed forces are still intact.

The consumption of crack units has, however, during the last year been dangerously large, and it is therefore probable that many divisions mainly consist of hastily trained reservists—'Unruh-heroes'—collected in the last rake-up. In particular, the quality of the Ersatzheer must be rather low. It is stationed in the homeland under the command of Colonel-General Fromm. His troops serve at the same time as garrisons—an important task, bearing in mind the twelve million foreigners in the country—and as reserve for the front-line units. The proportion between the latter and the reserve must be considered as decidedly unfavourable.

Some of the front-line units are organized as light divisions with reduced numerical strength. Other divisions are largely composed of specialist units or entirely trained for special service—for example, the Alpine troops. The strength of the various divisions is, therefore, fluctuating. To this must be added the changes caused by losses. The figure of 15,000 men per division used in the table is only an average.

How far the comb-out has been carried in Germany is perhaps best exemplified in the report that a special Hitlerjugend division of 15,000 men has lately been formed in the Waffen-S.S.

One million for the anti-aircraft personnel is a high figure which might surprise many. But in point of fact this figure only comprises the personnel which may be considered as regular. If we add the Hitlerjugend, Russian prisoners of war, and others who are being used for anti-aircraft service one might perhaps reach double that total. The enormous inflation of this weapon may partly explain the big shortage of personnel elsewhere.

The police troops have high fighting qualities and are one of the most important guarantees for keeping order in the occupied countries. They comprise all sorts of units, are specially trained in street-fighting and revolutionary technique, and are, as a rule, motorized.

The *étape* troops are entrusted with the organization of the *étape*



area—not strictly a military task. The same is true of O.T., the well-known pioneer organization, which carries out constructional work behind and at the front, and the units of the Labour Front which are usually stationed farther in the rear. The transport troops which are responsible for communications, particularly in occupied countries where they must also be prepared to fight partisans, sabotage, etc., might also be counted in the same category.

In addition to these there are special troops, designed for guarding prisoner camps, bridges, railway lines, etc., and to serve as garrisons in less exposed areas. They are as a rule composed of older reservists, wounded, who are not quite up to fighting standard, and hastily trained men previously passed as medically unfit. In this way the Third Reich has tried to recover its losses. The number of those put out of the fighting—killed, missing, prisoners, and badly wounded—must be estimateed at at least 3·5 million men. ,

The Air Force has been considerably weakened, and Göring has had to give up part of his personnel to the Army. Probably the Luftwaffe now does not amount to more than 10,000 to 12,000 first-line planes, mostly fighters. In themselves 10,000 to 12,000 planes represent a considerable force. But distributed over a whole continent, the major part of which is threatened by enemy bomb attacks, the number becomes absolutely insufficient. Furthermore, the German Air Force is handicapped by an enforced economy with fuel which also entails a deterioration in the standard of the personnel. As early as 1941 there were no less than 20,000 accidents in the German Air Force, out of which 1500 were total losses.

It looks, however, as if Germany had a not inconsiderable reserve in the air. Probably at least 3000 planes are ready to go into action—when the time comes. But this margin is too small.

The German Navy, apart from submarines, has not been fundamentally reinforced. The submarines have for many months been remarkably passive. One of the main reasons for this is certainly the perfection of the counter-measures. But even with regard to submarines many observers, probably quite rightly, assume that Germany has a reserve which is being kept back. Nor must it in this connexion be forgotten that Germany still has a number of big ships, among others one battleship and two battle-cruisers which also might be employed against an invasion in the West.

The coastal artillery has gradually been strengthened in the face

of the threat of invasion. It is strongest at the Channel coast, but is also of considerable strength on the North Sea coast.

With regard to Germany's allies, the Finnish and Hungarian armies must probably be considered as written off from the German point of view. The Germans have been unable to make either the one or the other fight for anything but their own country. The former contains about 300,000 men, while the Hungarians might mobilize about forty divisions and a substantial reserve, altogether certainly more than 1,000,000 men.

There remain Rumanians, Bulgarians, Slovaks, and Croats. The Rumanians do not enjoy a high reputation as soldiers. But they fought bravely in the East. Strongly decimated by its heavy losses, the Rumanian Army is, however, no great acquisition. The value of the Bulgarians entirely depends on the political development in the country. I have included them here provisionally, but on the other hand entirely disregarded General Vlassov's units, as their value seems to be dubious, to say the least of it.

The Slovaks can no longer be used outside their own country, and the same is true of the Croats, but both might play a rôle in the event of an Allied invasion of the Balkans.

A proper appreciation of the insufficiency of the German forces can only be arrived at by allocating them to the various bastions inside "the Fortress of Europe." A rough sketch, still quite inexpert and merely designed to give some idea of the proportions, might look something like the table on page 252.

This schematic table should give some idea of the German difficulties in making their forces suffice. If the Third Reich could have retained its superiority in the air a better disposition of the available resources and an intensive exploitation of the inner lines would have facilitated matters. But as the transport system becomes increasingly disorganized the advantage of the inner lines ceases. The Wehrmacht has lost its most important weapon—mobility.

An attempt to appraise Germany's military strength at present must take into account other factors than the purely numerical. One problem immediately presents itself—the question of fuel.

German experts have reported that the country needs twenty-two million tons of oil and petrol a year for an offensive conduct of the war. The restrained and defensive warfare applied since the

| Area                      | GERMAN<br>INF.<br>DIV. | GERMAN<br>ARM.<br>DIV. | POLICE<br>TROOPS | ARMY<br>TROOPS<br>A.A.<br>GARRISON<br>TROOPS | COASTAL<br>ARTILLERY | TOTAL<br>GERMAN<br>LAND<br>FORCES | GERMAN<br>CON-<br>FEDERATES |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Eastern Front             | 120                    | 10                     | 50,000           | 300,000                                      | —                    | 2,230,000                         | 145,000                     |
| Rear Area                 | 15                     | —                      | 150,000          | 260,000                                      | 15,000               | 650,000                           | 50,000                      |
| The "Generalgouvernement" | 3                      | —                      | 50,000           | 130,000                                      | —                    | 225,000                           | —                           |
| The Protectorate          | 3                      | —                      | 40,000           | 35,000                                       | —                    | 120,000                           | —                           |
| Finland                   | 6                      | —                      | —                | 20,000                                       | —                    | 110,000                           | —                           |
| Norway                    | 12                     | 1                      | 20,000           | 45,000                                       | 20,000               | 273,000                           | —                           |
| Denmark                   | 4                      | 1                      | 10,000           | 15,000                                       | 5,000                | 98,000                            | —                           |
| Western Europe            | 50                     | 6                      | 60,000           | 290,000                                      | 75,000               | 1,223,000                         | —                           |
| Italy                     | 25                     | 4                      | 25,000           | 60,000                                       | —                    | 492,000                           | 50,000                      |
| Balkans                   | 15                     | 1                      | 30,000           | 55,000                                       | 5,000                | 323,000                           | 1,175,000                   |
| Slovakia                  | —                      | —                      | 5,000            | —  | —                    | 5,000                             | 100,000                     |
| Germany                   | 5                      | —                      | 60,000           | 495,000                                      | 30,000               | 660,000                           | —                           |
| Strategic Reserve         | 12                     | 2                      | —                | 45,000                                       | —                    | 316,000                           | —                           |
|                           | 270                    | 25                     | 500,000          | 1,750,000                                    | 150,000              | 6,725,000                         | 1,520,000                   |

The Rear Area includes all conquered territory in the East (thus also the Baltic States and Bessarabia) sixty-five miles or more behind the front. The Ersatzheer in Germany of one million men is not included in the table.

end of 1942 must have demanded far less than this quantity—probably only 15–15.5 million tons.

In the spring of 1943 Germany's production of synthetic petrol was estimated as amounting to roughly six million tons a year. Four and a half million tons of oil and petrol were expected from Rumania during the year—production here is said to have decreased to 5.5 million tons (the damage by the big Anglo-American raid on Ploesti not counted). To this should be added the output from the oilfields in Austria and at Hanover of about a million tons, in Galicia of 0.8 million tons and the Hungarian surplus of one million tons—the total Hungarian oil production during 1943 is estimated at having increased to 2.2 million tons. This makes in all 13.3 million tons. The oilfields at Kiev and in Albania produced in 1942 0.3 million tons. On the other hand, Germany had to provide Italy with oil and petrol whereby the stocks were reduced in spite of economic strategy. At the time of writing they probably stand at not more than two million tons.

A number of other factors render it increasingly difficult for Germany to carry on the war for a long period. Important raw materials are beginning to run out, communications are upset, shortage of fats makes itself increasingly felt. The whole German community is suffering from overstrain.

But nobody should therefore underestimate Germany's strength for the moment. Nazism will not fall like the walls of Jericho. The Third Reich still has reserves, it still has cards which have not been played.

One of these is the much-talked-of new weapons. Their importance should not be exaggerated, but it would be wrong to think that it is all propaganda. Hitler's promise of reprisals in his speech of September 10 must be implemented. It is wise to assume the Germans are in possession of technical inventions designed as the ultimate resource of the German leaders. A foreign correspondent recording a semi-official statement in June 1943 about a possible German preventive action against Britain mentioned in passing a point worth attention. It was said that the German operation would be carried out with the assistance of long-distance artillery.

During the last war the Germans astonished the world with their 80-mile cannon. The Allies never succeeded in getting hold of them. They were melted down. To-day there should be nothing to

prevent the Germans from using guns with double that range. To obtain decisive effects either the explosive charge must have quite a different capacity than hitherto known or the projectile must have an enormous weight. In the latter case a rocket system is possible. The disadvantage of the necessarily limited precision would be considerably reduced by the fact that the missile would have the size of a small house.

With a range of, say, 160 miles the Germans might from well-protected batteries on the Continent devastate large areas in London and inflict serious damage on Britain. But *if* this should take place it would certainly not affect the determination of the British to carry the war to a victorious end. It would, of course, seriously weaken an important link in the Allied chain round Europe. But Britain, the United States, and Russia would in their turn reply with new weapons. From those areas in Britain which would lie outside the range of the German cannon annihilating blows would be delivered against Germany and the base area of the long-distance bombardment.

Germany's military strength depends also on the situation outside the leading circles. The question then arises: How strong is the Third Reich politically?

Nobody knows exactly what has happened behind the scenes in Germany during the last months. But it seems as if the military commanders had in fact intervened in face of the pressure from outside. The generals are said to have carried on negotiations for months with the chiefs of the Party, demanding that the Party should entirely refrain from trying to exercise influence on the armed forces and their leaders and instead concentrate on the enormous internal tasks, above all air-raid precautions and evacuation.

Hitler has retired more and more into the background, and it is doubtful whether he plays any political rôle for the moment. But his interests are represented by Himmler, the antipode of the armed forces.

Persistent rumours have maintained that the generals have on their side Hitler's most prominent assistant and formally appointed successor—Göring. One of the reasons for his strong position is said to be the assumption current both within the Party and the armed forces that the Allies would be inclined to accept Göring as a negotiating party.

The Italian capitulation must have made a tremendous impression on the German public. The average German is apt to draw parallels with the last world war, and Badoglio's capitulation naturally invites comparison. The word '1918' is beginning to hypnotize public feeling. The Nazis are aware of this and are busy fighting the idea that history could repeat itself. History never repeats itself, Staatssekretär Frank told the Czechs early in 1943. To prove the impossibility of another 1918 Nazi propaganda even refers to the Gestapo.

There is good reason for this. As long as Himmler and the Wehrmacht stick together all attempts at rebellion would be drowned in blood. The Gestapo have prepared the defence against the internal enemy to the smallest detail. Camouflaged as rockeries (for example, in Wittenbergplatz in Berlin) or as 'shelters for the personnel,' machine-gun nests have been established at stations and other traffic key-points. S.S. men, armed with automatic weapons, have been stationed at strategically important corner buildings, etc.

The internal front in Germany will hold as long as the tension between the armed forces on the one hand and the Party and the police on the other hand does not develop into open conflict. But the relations between Himmler and the generals are strongly influenced by the development of the external situation.

### *Farewell to the Third Reich*

By the end of the spring of 1943 my position in Berlin had become untenable. For some reason I was unpopular from the beginning with the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Propaganda. But unpopularity now grew into something worse. I was 'forgotten' in official invitations, and supervision was noticeably sharpened. From my balcony I could observe idle people studying the empty shop-windows at my street corner. The telephone became more and more troublesome. It was also a significant sign that no more complaints were heard. Previously there had been intimations at regular intervals from the Ministry of Propaganda and the Foreign Office. Now there was the silence of the grave.

Friends gave quiet warnings. It was therefore with some anxiety that I looked forward to June 1, which was the date fixed for my replacement.

I had already given notice to the German authorities in May that I intended to leave. The satisfaction on both sides of the Wilhelmstrasse was evident. One or two people with whom I had been in closer personal contact expressed their regret, but at the same time stated frankly that the decision was wise.

My family left a little in advance. The household was wound up, and on May 31 I boarded the plane at Tempelhof for home. It was a final farewell to the Third Reich—without regret.

